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As Gareth Bale moves for a new world record fee, the summer's real big spenders are revealed

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The global game caught on camera

COSTA RICA...Eddie Johnson of the USA and Costa Rica keeper Keylor Navas collide during a World Cup qualifier in San Jose

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POLAND...Legia fans prior to the Champions League play-off against Steaua Bucharest in Warsaw

GERMANY...Schalke's Felipe Santana takes up his position between nine Wolfsburg players in the Bundesliga

MACEDONIA...Ivan Trackowski reacts after being tackled during Macedonia's World Cup tie with Wales in Skopje

CZECH REPUBLIC...Bayern Munich coach Pep Guardiola watches his side's UEFA Super Cup match against Chelsea

BRAZIL...Botafogo's Lodeiro and Rafael Marques are out-jumped in the Brazilian Cup tie against Atletico Mineiro

AFGHANISTAN...Afghan players celebrate their 3-0 win against Pakistan in what was the first international match to be played in the war-torn city of Kabul for 10 years

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FROM THE EDITOR

IT IS ALMOST three years since FIFA's executive committee (almost half of whose members have since resigned or been forced to leave under a cloud of suspicion) took the hugely controversial decision to award the 2022 World Cup finals to Qatar.

Since then, arguments have raged, yet there is still more than nine years until a summer 2022 finals is due to kick off. We have never been in the position where a World Cup venue has been decided so far in advance.

> The longer the debate continues, the less likely the chances are of Qatar actually hosting the World Cup in 2022

Already the debate has moved on, from discussion about the motivations of the individual ExCo members, to the practicalities of the situation, and now to the legalities of a possible re-vote.

With nine years still to go, the arguments will carry on, even if Sepp Blatter hopes that October's ExCo decision on a switch to winter will put an end to such discussion. And the longer the debate continues, the less likely the chances are of Qatar actually hosting the World Cup in 2022.

FIFA has created a problem for which there is no easy solution. It's a story that will take many forms on these pages over the coming months and years.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1. Real Madrid break world record to sign Gareth Bale from Tottenham Hotspur ..... page 22
2. Holland and Italy become the first European teams to qualify for next summer's World Cup ..... page 90
3. Argentina reach the World Cup finals ..... page 91
4. USA and Costa Rica qualify for Brazil 2014 ..... page 92
5. Champions League group stage kicks off ..... page 39
6. Europe League preview ..... page 93
7. Australia's A-League starts with renewed optimism ..... page 30
8. Franck Ribery wins Best Player in Europe award ..... pages 9 and 78
9. Muricy Ramalho returns as coach of Sao Paulo ..... page 28
10. FIFA ExCo prepares to discuss switching of the 2022 World Cup to the winter ..... page 76

"La Liga is at breaking point. In a bid to get closer to Real Madrid and Barcelona, some clubs have done crazy things and have ended up covered with debts in a contracting economy"

Renowned Spanish economist Jose Maria Gay de Liebana is shocked at total debts in La Liga of €3.6billion

REP OF IRELAND

Trapattoni goes as coaches pay price for failure

All over...Trapattoni had five years in charge of the Republic of Ireland

Giovanni Trapattoni left his position after five years as coach of the Republic of Ireland following a defeat by Austria which left the Irish with little chance of overhauling Sweden for second place in their World Cup qualifying group.

Trapattoni was one of a number of coaches who paid the price for their sides' poor results in the latest round of World Cup qualifiers.

Mexico turned to Victor Manuel Vucetich after firing Jose Manuel De la Torre following a home defeat by Honduras. A further loss to the USA left them in fifth place in their qualifying group.

Josef Pesice was named interim coach for the Czech Republic's final two World Cup qualifiers after Michal Bilek stepped down.

Cyprus coach Nikos Nioplias resigned with the side bottom of Group E following a 2-0 home defeat to Slovenia while Csaba Laszlo left his post as coach of Lithuania.

Tunisia coach Nabil Maaloul resigned after a surprise World Cup exit following a 2-0 home defeat by Cape Verde Islands. WS

Shock defeat...Maaloul

UEFA

Europe's best...Ribery with the trophy

Bayern rewarded as Ribery claims European prize

Bayern Munich's success last season was recognised by UEFA when Franck Ribery won its Best Player in Europe award for 2012-13.

The France winger was the clear winner of the poll of 53 journalists – one from each UEFA member country – and received 36 votes, ahead of Barcelona's Lionel Messi on 14. Cristiano Ronaldo of Real Madrid received three votes.

The trio were selected from an original 10-player shortlist which included three other Bayern Munich players: Thomas Muller, Arjen Robben and Bastian Schweinsteiger.

Ribery was recognised as the outstanding performer in a Bayern side that won the Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup last season.

He was presented with the award by UEFA president Michel Platini following a live vote at the Champions League draw in Monaco.

• Germany and Frankfurt goalkeeper Nadine Angerer was the inaugural winner of the UEFA Best Women's Player in Europe Award for 2012-13. She finished ahead of Wolfsburg and Germany midfielder Lena Gossling and Sweden striker Lotta Schelin.

HEROES & VILLAINS

Marksman...Toni has been a prolific goalscorer in Serie A

LUCA TONI

Two goals on his debut for Verona, in a 2-1 win against Milan, meant he has now scored for eight different clubs in Serie A. Only Nicola Amoruso, with nine, can better that record.

YEOVIL TOWN

The English second-tier club let Birmingham City score an uncontested goal in extra-time of their League Cup encounter. Earlier in the game, Yeovil had kept possession and scored after the visitors' goalkeeper, Colin Doyle, had kicked the ball out of play when one of his team-mates was injured.

MIROSLAV KLOSE

Equalled Gerd Muller's record of 68 goals for Germany when he scored in the World Cup qualifier against Austria.

Level...Klose matched Muller with his goal v Austria

GIANLUIGI BUFFON

The Juventus goalkeeper equalled Fabio Cannavaro's national record of 136 caps when he started the World Cup qualifier against Czech Republic.

GABRIEL AGBONLAHOR

The Aston Villa striker clattered into and injured One Direction singer – and Doncaster Rovers reserve – Louis Tomlinson, causing the boy-band member to leave the game, after he was sick at the side of the pitch, during Stiliyan Petrov's benefit match at Celtic Park.

ROGERIO CENI

The Sao Paulo goalkeeper, who has scored more than 100 goals from free-kicks and penalties, missed a third spot-kick in a row when his penalty was saved by opposite number Galatto as Sao Paulo lost at home to Criciuma in the Brazilian league.

Spot of bother...Ceni missed a third successive penalty

SHAKHTER KARAGANDY

The Kazakhstan champions were reprimanded by UEFA for the ritual killing of a sheep before their Champions League play-off against Celtic.

CRISTIANO RONALDO

The Real Madrid striker refused to travel to Monaco for UEFA's Best Player in Europe award. Fellow nominees Franck Ribery and Lionel Messi did attend.

No show...Ronaldo sat out UEFA's awards show

"He still hasn't come to terms with signing for Real and is uncomfortable"

A Real Madrid spokesman comes clean on the subject of new midfield signing Asier Illarramendi, who was ruled out by stress on the first weekend of the season

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to http://bit.ly/17n3QXj

1 ANTOINE GREIZMANN
Real Sociedad v Lyon
A spectacular bicycle kick from just inside the penalty area following a left-wing cross by Carlos Vela.

2 HARIS SEFEROVIC
Real Sociedad v Lyon
From the same Champions League tie, he scores with a left-foot volley following a series of delicate one-touch passes.

3 DAVID VILLA
Atletico Madrid v Barcelona
Some neat passes from Villa inside his own half, before he continues his run and volleys home from the edge of the penalty area.

4 ARJEN ROBBEN
Bayern Munich v Nuremberg
Cuts in from the right flank, dribbles past three defenders and then nutmegs the goalkeeper as his shot goes in off the far post.

5 FERNANDO TORRES
Chelsea v Bayern Munich
Meets Andre Schurrle's cross with a perfectly executed first-time shot in off the post to give Chelsea the lead in the UEFA Super Cup.

6 JUAN MANUEL OLIVERA
Nautico v Sport Recife
A well-worked move in a Brazilian derby in which the ball doesn't touch the ground and is finished with a volley from just outside the area.

WINNERS

PEP GUARDIOLA
Became only the third coach, after Alex Ferguson and Louis Van Gaal, to win the UEFA Super Cup with two different clubs.

LUXEMBOURG
Beat Northern Ireland 3-2 to record their first World Cup qualifying victory on home soil for 41 years.

APOEL
Lost their Europa League qualifier to Zulte Waregem but reprieved as "lucky losers" after Fenerbahce's Euro ban was upheld.

LOSERS

UDINESE, STUTTGART, FEYENOORD
Three prominent clubs failed to reach the Europa League group stage when beaten by Slovan Liberec, Rijeka and Kuban Krasnodar.

MEXICO
Defeat in the USA left *El Tri* fifth in their qualifying group and struggling to make Brazil 2014.

FENERBAHCE
Eliminated from the Champions League play-offs by Arsenal and barred from the Europa League. They also can't play in the Champions League next season should they qualify.

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"Finally I feel like a footballer again"

A victim of two cruciate-ligament injuries, Fiorentina's Giuseppe Rossi scored his first goal in 686 days in a win against Catania

15 MATCHES THAT MATTERED

Recent crunch games from around the globe

JUVENTUS 4
LAZIO 0
The reigning Serie A champions scored three times in four second-half minutes to claim their sixth Italian Super Cup and equal Milan's record.

BARCELONA 7
LEVANTE 0
Gerardo Martino had to wait just three minutes for his first goal as coach of Barca as the *Blaugrana* secured their biggest-ever win on the opening day of a season.

AJAX 2
FEYENOORD 1
Kolbeinn Sigthorsson scored twice as Ajax condemned Feyenoord to a third defeat in three Eredivisie games – their worst-ever start to a campaign.

AFGHANISTAN 3
PAKISTAN 0
A sold-out crowd of 6,000 in Kabul's AFF Stadium for this friendly witnessed Afghanistan's first international on home soil for 10 years.

UDINESE 1
SLOVAN LIBEREC 3
The Czech team caused a major shock in the Europa League when they knocked out the Italians – thanks mainly to this first-leg win in Trieste.

CARDIFF CITY 3
MANCHESTER CITY 2
Back in the top flight after 51 years, Cardiff beat last season's runners-up. Another sign that this year's Premier League title race will be wide open.

AUSTRIA VIENNA 2
DINAMO ZAGREB 3
Although they lost on the night, Roman Kienast's late goal gave his side victory on aggregate to reach the Champions League group stage for the first time.

BARCELONA 0
ATLETICO MADRID 0
Despite Lionel Messi missing a penalty, Barca won the Spanish Super Cup on away goals after they had drawn the first leg 1-1 in Madrid.

BAYERN MUNICH 2
CHELSEA 2 aet
(Bayern won 5-4 on penalties)
Romelu Lukaku missed the all-important spot-kick in Prague as the Germans claimed the European Super Cup.

SPORTING LISBON 1
BENFICA 1
New signings Fredy Montero of Sporting and Benfica's Lazar Markovic scored a goal each as the Lisbon derby ended all square.

SLOVAKIA 1
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 2
A stunning winner from Izet Hajrovic kept Bosnia on course for automatic qualification from their World Cup group with two games left to play.

UZBEKISTAN 1
JORDAN 1
(Jordan won 8-7 on penalties)
The Asian World Cup play-off game ended 2-2 on aggregate before Jordan went on to win the shoot-out.

ITALY 2
CZECH REPUBLIC 1
Two second-half goals in three minutes from Giorgio Chiellini and Mario Balotelli secured Italy's place in Brazil after they had trailed to Libor Kozak's first-half effort.

ANDORRA 0
HOLLAND 2
Robin Van Persie was on target twice in the second half for the visitors as Holland made certain of their place in next summer's World Cup finals.

PARAGUAY 2
ARGENTINA 5
Two Lionel Messi penalties saw Alejandro Sabella's team secure their passage through to next year's finals in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

David CONN

AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

Common sense demands a re-run of the 2022 vote – but FIFA won't see sense

In FIFA's about-turn over the 2022 World Cup – maintaining it will be in Qatar but likely to require the rest of football to accommodate it in the winter – there is an inability to recognise the organisation's own faults that is so vast it borders on supra-human.

If the executive committee decides on a winter move as expected, it is not simply a matter of high-handedly asking world football to rearrange its fixtures and calendar.

The European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL) issued a reasoned statement not absolutely setting their face against a move – as Richard Scudamore, the combative Premier League chief executive, has – but asking for a serious analysis of the implications before any decision is made.

Sadly, the chances for such a proper professional approach over the hosting of the world's greatest sporting tournament are dispiritingly slight. Much more likely is an executive committee meeting behind several reinforced closed doors in FIFA's big, black bunker of a headquarters in Zurich. Then, one of Sepp Blatter's famous press conferences, in which he will present himself as captain of the FIFA *bateau*, steering it to calm waters, by sailing the World Cup into the Gulf at a more temperate time of year.

True accountability for the process, a genuine explanation of what decision has been taken and why, will likely be missing. The reason to grimly suspect this will happen is because FIFA refuses even to see this question is much greater than the one of summer temperatures in Qatar.

Blatter's acceptance that the issue needs to be addressed fundamentally undermines the decision-making process which, in December 2010, awarded the World Cup to Qatar. Logically, to ask for a move to winter demands the whole process be run again.

That is not a roundabout way of objecting to Qatar as a host; the more fundamental point goes to the reason why the EPFL is unlikely to see its request for an honest and thorough appraisal of the decision.

The difficulties of hosting a summer World Cup in Qatar were raised by FIFA's own technical reports into the countries bidding to host the 2018 and 2022 tournaments, which were voted on together.

Yet the organisation whose executive committee voted for Qatar on that basis now appears to be recognising that a tournament in near 50-degree heat and stifling humidity might not be ideal. It suggests these men might not have bothered to read the technical reports before voting.

We know, from the Qataris, who mounted a splendid and energetic campaign, that the ExCo members did not feel they had to actually visit any of the countries before making their decision. The lack of published explanation for selecting a particular country, and the fact the decision countered FIFA's own professional advice, leads one to suspect the probity of the bid process.

Again, that is not to imply Qatar did anything improper. FIFA's secretary-general, Jerome Valcke, now leading the winter-move diplomacy, has said he did not really mean what he wrote in an email that Qatar "bought" the World Cup.

For all the raised eyebrows at the tiny but enormously rich state gaining enough votes to host a tournament – for which there was no infrastructure – nothing untoward has been proved, and the Qataris take great exception to any suggestions of impropriety.

> The difficulties of hosting a summer World Cup in Qatar were raised by FIFA's own technical reports

Yet members of that ExCo have since been found guilty, by various forums, of corruption. Jack Warner, to whom Valcke wrote that email, is gone. Chuck Blazer, his long-time partner at CONCACAF, was found to have profited massively from its business. Mohamed Bin Hammam, of Qatar, is banned for life. Power-brokers Nicolas Leoz and Ricardo Teixeira resigned shortly before damning reports on their conduct and fondness for FIFA money.

Those men were all major influences and voters in the process which resulted in Qatar being awarded the World Cup without explanation. FIFA will not make everything all right by telling the world this decision cannot be moved, but instead, all the rest of football must move to accommodate it. WS

"This team of ours is even better than the 1986 side"

Former Belgium sweeper Philippe Albert claims the *Diables Rouges* have the talent to reach the last-four of next year's World Cup, thus equalling the country's performance at the Mexico tournament

REPORTS we couldn't make up

Gangland hit...Marseille sports director Anigo lost his son in a turf war

1 The son of Marseille sports director Jose Anigo was shot dead in a suspected gangland killing in the French city.

Adrien Anigo, aged 30, was killed while driving a rented car in a suburb of northern Marseille. His death was the latest in a long line of retribution killings in the city.

Anigo Jnr was no stranger to organised crime. He was imprisoned for participation in a dozen armed robberies in 2007 and was due to stand trial again next spring.

"When I said this town eats up its children, I was right," said his father.

2 Romildo Fonseca da Silva, the masseur of fourth division Brazilian club Aparecidense, faces disciplinary action after he prevented a certain goal in a league game against Tupi.

Da Silva was standing by the post when Tupi launched an attack late in the game.

Last line of defence...Da Silva

He stuck out a foot to clear one shot off the line, then moved into the goal to stop the rebound and eventually bundled the ball away, before turning and making his exit by hurdling the advertising boards. He headed straight down the tunnel, chased by angry Tupi players.

3 The bizarre sport of FootGolf – which, as its name implies, is a cross between football and golf – was first established in Holland, four years ago.

The game is played on a golf course with enlarged holes, 55cm in diameter, and players basically play the standard 18 or nine holes, kicking the ball from tee to green. Normal golfing obstacles such as trees, bunkers and water hazards are in play.

On October 4 the first tournament to be played in France will take place at the Golf du Plessis Bellefontaine, in the Val d'Oise.

Former France internationals Jean-Pierre Papin and Vincent Guerin are official ambassadors for the event and they got in some practise recently at the Rueil Malmaison course on the outskirts of Paris.

The sport of FootGolf is beginning to take off worldwide and has already crossed the Atlantic to the United States.

The first-ever World Cup competition took place in Budapest in 2012.

Par for the course...former internationals Papin (inset) and Guerin are official ambassadors for France's first-ever FootGolf tournament

Oversight...Niang missed out

4 French forward M'Baye Niang missed out on a place in Milan's Champions League squad thanks to a clerical error.

The Serie A club named Stephan El Shaarawy in their "A List" of players, overlooking the fact that he was eligible for the B List.

OBITUARIES

Safe hands...double World Cup winner Gilmar

GILMAR (1930-2013)
A World Cup winner in 1958 and 1962, he kept goal 94 times for Brazil and won the Libertadores Cup twice with Santos.

COSTICA STEFANESCU (1951-2013)
Romania's captain at the 1984 European Championship, he wore the skipper's armband for 43 of his 64 international appearances and was a member of the Universitatea Craiova side that reached the UEFA Cup semi-finals in 1983. His 490 appearances in the Romanian top flight remains the second-most of all time.

Skipper...Stefanescu led Romania at Euro 84

International...Spilar

MAREK SPILAR (1975-2013)
The Slovakia defender, who won 30 caps for his country and played for Club Brugge in Belgium, committed suicide by jumping out of a window in his fifth-floor flat.

Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

Movement matters, but running is irrelevant

You've just seen a breathtaking display of football skills – a corkscrewing dribble, a nutmeg, then a chip over the goalkeeper from a ridiculous angle – a superb goal, but before you can take it all in, here comes Fred Cleverclogs, your helpful TV expert, to put you right.

Yeah, that fancy stuff was all very well, but the goal was really all about the run that no8 made during the build up. The fact that you can't remember no8 even being involved just shows what a dope you are, and how smart old Cleverclogs is.

Bah! and enough already with this mystique of the runs. I mean, is there anyone who imagines that soccer has ever been played by people standing still? Of course there are runs, hundreds of them per game, and virtually all of them are obvious and predictable. So why are we invited to marvel when wingback no2 gallops forward into all that open space?

"Number two is making a run!" comes the breathless news – usually to tell us something that we can see for ourselves anyway, and very often a distraction, a movement we can ignore. There is, as so often in football, a vocabulary problem here. What matters is movement, not runs. Runs, as eulogised by the Cleverclog fraternity, invariably involve distance and speed. They are obvious bursts of physical energy, and we all know that honest, strenuous effort is a good thing that deserves to be rewarded.

Nor am I disposed to listen to the Cleverclog arguments that this fruitless run over here and that useless dash over there were vital because they distracted defenders. Frankly, big deal. Presumably the alternative to those runs being made is for the players to dawdle about – and we don't expect players who are paid millions to be doing that.

In an attempt to counter the charge that they are spouting nonsense, the experts like to bamboozle us with the secrets of late runs and delayed runs and probing runs and diagonal runs and secondary runs and so forth.

More pseudo-clever poppycock that can be ignored. So players move about. And their opponents respond to that movement. Or maybe they don't. To have the sport analysed in terms of obvious physical activity does not seem to me to be at all useful. For a start, it downplays – even ignores – the web of lesser movement, but more subtle movement, that is going on all the time.

> Focusing on the player making a run tends to end up as a criticism of the player on the ball, should he not deliver a pass to the runner

The movement within the penalty areas, for instance, where players rarely "make runs", but do achieve much with quick short, sharp dashes, or sudden accelerations

Focusing on the player making a run also tends to end up as a criticism of the player on the ball, should he not deliver a pass to the runner. It is a view of the game that demands reward for nothing more than physical effort, a stunted view that refuses to admit that it is the decisions and the actions of the player with the ball at his feet that define football, not the player "making a run".

Football is movement, constant movement. Of course that involves players moving in to positions where they can receive a pass. The Barcelona players are rather good at that, there always seem to be plenty of immediate options for the guy with the ball...and there are very few opportunities for the Cleverclogs to exalt runs during a Barcelona game. The intricacy and rapidity of the player movement reveals a style in which the notion of a player "making a run" doesn't fit.

The football is simply too good, too intelligent – too beautiful? – to submit to the banality of the Cleverclogs and their watch-the-runs obsession. WS

"If [Gareth] Bale is worth €100million, I would have been priceless. No Englishman who has ever come to Spanish football has succeeded"

Hristo Stoichkov (left) thinks the Welshman is overrated...and English

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Appointments, sackings and loans

IN

EUROPE

GARETH SOUTHGATE took over as coach of the England under-21 team on a three-year contract, while **BOGDAN STELEA**, who won 91 caps and played in two World Cups for his country, replaced Emil Sandoi in charge of Romania's under-21s.

THOMAS SCHNEIDER replaced Bruno Labbadia as coach of Stuttgart after they lost their opening three games of the Bundesliga season.

JAVI GARCIA, who led Almeria into the Spanish top flight last term, took over at Osasuna after coach Jose Luis Mendilibar was sacked following defeat in the club's first three games of the season in La Liga.

STALE SOLBAKKEN, who led the club to five Danish league titles, returned to take charge of Copenhagen after they dismissed Ariel Jacobs following a failure to win any of their first five games in the league this season.

BRANKO IVANKOVIC was appointed coach of Dinamo Zagreb for a third time. He replaced Krunoslav Jurcic, who was sacked after the Croatian side lost 2-0 at home to Austria Vienna in the Europa League play-off round.

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho's son, **JOSE MARIO MOURINHO**, joined the youth set-up at Premier League rivals Fulham. The 14-year-old goalkeeper played for Real Madrid's Canillas team when his dad was coach of the Spanish club.

Aim...Southgate

Returning...Ramalho

SOUTH AMERICA

MURICY RAMALHO took charge of Sao Paulo for a third time after the Brazilian club fired Paulo Autuori.

CONCACAF

Mexico's Olympic gold medal-winning coach **LUIS FERNANDO TENA** took temporary control of the senior national side following the departure of Jose Manuel de la Torre.

Monterrey appointed **JOSE GUADALUPE CRUZ** as coach after parting company with Victor Manuel Vucetich, who had won the last thee CONCACAF Champions League titles. Elsewhere in Mexico, **JUAN CARLOS ORTEGA** took over from Benjamin Galindo at Guadalajara; Puebla replaced Manuel Lapuente with **RUBEN OMAR ROMANO**; **JOSE LUIS TREJO** took over at Pumas; **ENRIQUE MEZA** was put in charge of Pachuca; and Atlante handed the job to Uruguayan **RUBEN ISRAEL**.

AFRICA

YUSIF ABUBAKARHAS was appointed coach of Ghanaian top-flight side Heart of Lions.

ASIA

Bahrain's **MOHAMMED SHAMLAN** replaced Zavisa Milosavljevic of Serbia as coach of Pakistan.

After five successive J-League defeats, Omiya Ardija sacked coach Zdenko Verdenik and replaced him with **TSUTOMU OGURA**. They also signed Australia captain **LUCAS NEILL** on a four-month contract.

Caretaker...Tena

OUT

Club only...Miller

EUROPE

Vancouver Whitecaps striker **KENNY MILLER**, who scored the 18th goal of his 69-cap career for Scotland in August's 3-2 defeat by England, has retired from international football.

Former Germany midfielder **THOMAS HITZLSPERGER** and Austria midfielder **PAUL SCHARNER** both retired.

SOUTH AMERICA

Fluminense's Brazil-born Portugal midfielder **DECO** announced his retirement at the age of 36.

Nautico coach **JORGINHO** resigned after just five games, all defeats, in charge of the Brazilian club.

CONCACAF

MLS side Columbus Crew sacked **ROBERT WARZYCHA** after five years as coach.

AFRICA

Cameroon's **SAMUEL ETO'O** quit international football after the 1-0 World Cup defeat at home to Libya.

Third time...Terim is back in charge of national team

Terim steps up for Turkey

FATIH TERIM agreed to take charge of Turkey's national team, in conjunction with his role as coach of Galatasaray, until the end of their World Cup qualifying campaign.

Terim, who has held the position on two previous occasions, stepped up after Abdullah Avci left by mutual consent.

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Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Hypocrite Taylor is in an untenable position

It's some years since I have been in touch with Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the players' union, but for a long time I had very friendly relations with him. Now he is in what might be called "position untenable"; a classic case of "don't do what I do, do as I told you".

The colossal amounts of money he has squandered compulsively on sports betting constitute not so much a crime as a disease, compulsion being the *mot juste*. Neither he nor the players who have suffered from the same self-destructive obsession can wholly be blamed on moral grounds. In such cases an obsession is a damnably difficult thing to cure.

What does stick in the throat is Taylor's blandly concomitant and shameless exhortations to the members of the union which pays him – overpays him? – so well that they should beware, and at all costs, to avoid the dangers of betting. The word "hypocrisy" hovers above the sorry affair. Orwellian "Doublethink" seems to have been crucially involved.

That Taylor's union cohorts should blithely have expressed confidence in him defies logical explanation. There is good reason to believe that in such dire circumstances Taylor himself should simply resign; and perhaps by the time you read this he will have done, rather than reportedly calling in lawyers to challenge *The Sun*.

What can they possibly do for him if the tabloid's alarming details are, as they appear to be, correct?

Under fire...Taylor is reported to have spent massive sums on betting while preaching anti-gambling sermons to players

What does Dyke think about playing a winter World Cup which would be most disruptive to European club football?

Obvious...Dyke

Will Dyke be the same as all the rest?

Is the new top banana of the Football Association going to sit on the fence? Suddenly and belatedly, Greg Dyke, rather like a man who has discovered that fire burns, water is wet and the sun rises in the East, has seemingly discovered that playing the 2012 World Cup in the 50 degrees heat of Qatar would not be a good idea.

With respect, most of us already knew that. But what of the obvious corollary that playing it in winter would have the most disruptive effect on European club football, as the Premier League's Richard Scudamore has firmly declared.

What does Dyke think about that? Is he prepared to tell us? In his days as main man at the BBC, he came out with the bizarre declaration that the Beeb was "hideously white". Had he said hideously overmanned or hideously overpaid at the top levels it might have been valid. As it was, this seemed inverted racism, a surrender to the ghastly disease of political correctness. Think of the eruption had anyone used the phrase "hideously black".

I still hope Dyke proves a more forceful and focused leader than his predecessor, David Bernstein, who made such a dog's breakfast of the John Terry affair, though he might be afforded half a cheer for his principled but futile attempt to object to the ineffable Sepp Blatter's re-election as FIFA president.

Arsenal show Spurs that Bale will be irreplaceable

Ah, the glorious uncertainties and ironies of football. The sporadic reminder, even in these profligate days, that money isn't everything; or not quite. Who would have put money on depleted Arsenal, who had just lost Lukas Podolski on top of Mikel Arteta, and yet to welcome Mesut Ozil, to beat a Spurs team which even without Gareth Bale had begun at a gallop, having signed a profusion of foreign stars?

In control...Arsenal's Laurent Koscielny (right) gets the better of Tottenham's new signing Paulinho in the north London derby

Yet the Gunners, especially in the first half, played far the better football, making irrelevant the fact that throughout the summer they had made but a single major (free) signing, Mathieu Flamini, and going ahead through the big French striker, Olivier Giroud.

What a deep satisfaction for the beleaguered Arsene Wenger, whose every attempt in the cauldron of the transfer market had ended in frustration. The implication of a game in which the Gunners were even able to prevail despite the loss of their essential playmaker Jack Wilshere – yet again, alas, near half-time – was that for all their huge expenditure, Spurs must surely confront the fact that there is no substitute for Bale. As for Arsenal, who by stark comparison with Chelsea, find themselves in a dauntingly difficult European Cup group, they may breathe and hope again.

Before the North London derby, Wenger gave hostages to fortune when he warned Spurs of over-egging (if I may mix metaphors) the transfer pudding. He could have been embarrassed by the eventual result but in fact it seemed to underline his reservations.

It was a match which may well have shown that Bale is simply irreplaceable. But how well will he do in Madrid?

His ecstatic welcome was predictable. David Beckham, eternally punching far beyond his worth and weight, got one too, but did little at Real to justify it, though he did eventually play his way back into the team after being dropped.

Bale has matured into an "all court" player but so has Ronaldo. Impasse?

Michael Owen, an immeasurably better footballer than the one-paced, never-get-to-the-line Beckham, scarcely got a welcome at all at the airport. In fact, he arrived at Real when an initially dazzling career had been subverted by injury and didn't do much in Madrid.

Cristiano Ronaldo has said he isn't worried by the advent of Bale, but should Bale be worried about Ronaldo? At Tottenham, Bale matured into what you might call an "all court" player, going in attack where he pleased, no longer sticking largely to the left flank but as often as not moving powerfully and explosively into the middle. But Ronaldo likes to do that as well; he, too, starting and starring as a winger but, over the years, becoming a wholly versatile striker. An impasse?

Irony upon irony for Chelsea

Chelsea expended a fortune on Willian, Samuel Eto'o and the rest. But against Bayern Munich, in the match between the two European cup winners in Prague, Chelsea fielded only Andre Schurrle.

Further irony: Fernando Torres, such a costly disappointment for so long, scored a splendid goal against a Bayern team virtually at full strength bar the important Bastian Schweinsteiger and Javi Martinez, with the latter on the bench. Torres knows again that his position is seriously threatened. On recent form, how could he now be compared with Eto'o? Yet that was a glorious goal, a blast from the past as you might somewhat unkindly say.

Chelsea lost only on the irrelevance of penalties and after having Ramires sent off. In other words, a Chelsea team without its two bright new Brazilians or Eto'o, and virtually the team with which they ended last season, minus – somewhat strangely – the star of that campaign, Juan Mata.

Guardiola's northern European problem

As for Bayern, their somewhat laboured win against Chelsea made me wonder not for the first time whether Pep Guardiola is the manager to keep them in pole positions.

It seems he has already worked on certain tactical changes. But once again you have to ask yourself whether the elegant inter-passing style so shrewdly and patiently inoculated on their youngsters almost from boyhood by Barcelona can possibly be transmitted, even in a diluted form. Bayern are a northern European team whose players are for the most part seasoned internationals with their own successful way of doing things. WS

Fight ahead...Torres will face a new threat from new Chelsea signing Eto'o

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Carry on spending

Gareth Bale's world-record move to Real Madrid was the biggest deal of a summer transfer market that was dominated by a small group of big-spending clubs. Gavin Hamilton reports

Another year, another world record transfer fee paid by Real Madrid. Gareth Bale became the costliest player on the planet when the Spanish club finally agreed to pay Tottenham Hotspur's price tag of €100million for a player who cost them just £5m in 2007.

One hundred and eight years after Alf Common became the first professional footballer to change clubs for a fee of £1,000, Bale became the first player to break the 100m barrier, albeit in euros.

Bannish any thoughts that the Bosman ruling of 1995 would put an end to the transfer fee as we know it. Real Madrid have broken the world record five times in the past 13 years – Luis Figo in 2000, Zinedine Zidane in 2001, Kaka in 2007 and Cristiano Ronaldo in 2009 – and all when Florentino Perez has been president of the club.

The size of the Bale fee prompted UEFA president Michel Platini to describe the transfer system as "robbery" though he later qualified his remarks, stating: "In terms of the morality of the fee, this question was being asked 30 years ago when Diego Maradona moved for €5m. People said 'wow, €5m for a player' and then it was Zidane for €60m and then Cristiano Ronaldo for €80m and now Mr Bale for €100million."

The transfer was a long drawn-out affair that followed a familiar pattern to

Madrid's previous world-record signings.

The summer began with Perez insisting that Madrid had not made an offer for Bale. There followed a campaign of "love-bombing" of Bale by Real players, who praised his qualities in the Madrid press. Then the player's desire for a move for Champions League football prompted a stand-off with Spurs, who played hard ball in negotiations. That in turn prompted Perez to raise doubts about the move before a final deal was struck days before the transfer window closed and a triumphant presentation at the Santiago Bernabeu in front of 30,000 fans.

Determined...Bale (left) with Perez

Happy...Ronaldo has signed a new deal with Real making him the best-paid player in the world

"The negotiations have been intense, complicated and prolonged, but finally we have achieved our aim and we are delighted to welcome Gareth Bale," said Perez.

There was a minor dispute over the reporting of the fee. Spurs announced it as €100m but Madrid, anxious to soothe the ego of Cristiano Ronaldo, insisted the fee was just shy of the world record they paid Manchester United for Ronaldo three years ago.

A fat new contract for Ronaldo, confirming him as Madrid's highest-paid player was a by-product of the Bale deal, and a reminder that Perez's policy of signing big-name players does not come cheap – or make life easy for Carlo Ancelotti.

Madrid's new coach was but a bystander in the process, as he was left to contemplate how to include Bale and Ronaldo, two similar players, in his starting line-up.

> "The negotiations have been intense, complicated and prolonged"
> Florentino Perez on the deal for Gareth Bale

Bale's arrival mirrors that of David Beckham in 2003, when the club already had a world-record signing, Luis Figo, playing in a similar position (right midfield) to that of the new arrival. But Perez needed a big-name signing after missing out on a number of targets, including Neymar, Edinson Cavani and Radamel Falcao.

Big attraction...Falcao arrives in Monaco

Missed opportunity

Neymar had a long-standing agreement to join Barcelona, although it was revealed recently that Madrid could have signed Neymar for £50,000 in 2006 when he was 14 but passed on the opportunity and he subsequently returned to Brazil.

The bottom line for Perez is that

Top individual transfers of the summer 2013

(all in Euros)

Gareth BALE 100m Tottenham H to Real Madrid	**Gonzalo HIGUAIN 38.5m** Real Madrid to Napoli	**Stevan JOVETIC 26m** Fiorentina to Manchester City	**Mamadou SAKHO 19m** Paris Saint-Germain to Liverpool
	Mario GOTZE 37m Bor Dortmund to Bayern Munich	**Thiago ALCANTARA 25m** Barcelona to Bayern Munich	**Aleksandr KOKORIN 19m** Dynamo Moscow to Anzhi (June)
Edinson CAVANI 64.5m Napoli to Paris Saint-Germain	**WILLIAN 35m** Anzhi to Chelsea	**Joao MOUTINHO 25m** Porto to Monaco	**Aleksandr KOKORIN 19m** Anzhi to Dynamo Moscow (Aug)
Radamel FALCAO 60m Atletico Madrid to Monaco	**Marouane FELLAINI 35m** Everton to Manchester United	**BERNARD 25** At Mineiro to Shakhtar Donetsk	**Andy CARROLL 17.5m** Liverpool to West Ham United
NEYMAR 57m Santos to Barcelona	**MARQUINHOS 31.4m** Roma to Paris Saint-Germain	**Alvaro NEGREDO 25m** Sevilla to Manchester City	**Luiz GUSTAVO 17.5m** Bayern Munich to Wolfsburg
Mesut OZIL 50m Real Madrid to Arsenal	**Roberto SOLDADO 30m** Valencia to Tottenham Hotspur	**Andre SCHURRLE 22m** Bayer Leverkusen to Chelsea	**Kevin STROOTMAN 16.5** PSV to Roma
James RODRIGUEZ 45m Porto to Monaco	**ISCO 30m** Malaga to Real Madrid	**Jesus NAVAS 20m** Sevilla to Manchester City	**Mario GOMEZ 15.5m** Bayern Munich to Fiorentina
FERNANDINHO 40m Shakhtar Donetsk to Man City	**Erik LAMELA 30m** Roma to Tottenham Hotspur	**Geoffrey KONDOGBIA 20m** Sevilla to Monaco	**James McCARTHY 15.3m** Wigan Athletic to Everton
Asier ILLARRAMENDI 39m Real Sociedad to Real Madrid	**Henrikh MKHITARYAN 27.5m** Shakhtar Donetsk to B Dortmund	**PAULINHO 19.7m** Corinthians to Tottenham H	**Pablo OSVALDO 15.1m** Roma to Southampton

Europe's big spenders

The clubs who spend the most in summer 2013 - net transfer business in Euros

MONACO
161.2M/£140.2M

IN 166.2m Falcao (Atletico, 60m); Rodriguez (Porto, 45m); Moutinho (Porto, 25m); Kondogbia (Sevilla, 20m); Toulalan (Malaga, 5m); Martial (Lyon, 5m); Isimat-Mirin (Valenciennes, 4m); Borja Lopez (Gijon, 2.2)

OUT 5m Toure (Al Nasr, 3.5m); Medjani (Olympiakos, 1.5m)

MANCHESTER CITY
107M/£93.0M

IN 116m Fernandinho (Skakhtar, 40m); Jovetic (Fiorentina, 26m); Negredo (Sevilla, 25m); Navas (Sevilla, 20m); Demichelis (Atletico, 5m)

OUT 9m Tevez (Juventus, 9m)

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN
81.9M/£71.2M

IN 110.9m Cavani (Napoli, 64.5m); Marquinhos (Roma, 31.4m); Digne (Lille, 15m)

OUT 29m Sakha (Liverpool, 19m); Gameiro (Sevilla, 10m)

CHELSEA
69.4M/£60.3M

IN 72.4m Willian (Shakhtar, 35m); Schurrle (Leverkusen, 22m); Van Ginkel (Vitesse, 9.4m); Atsu (Porto, 4.1m); Cuevas (O'Higgins, 1.9m)

OUT 3m Bruma (PSV 3m)

REAL MADRID
65.5M/£62.2M

IN 181.5m Bale (Tottenham, 100m); Illarramendi (Sociedad, 39m); Isco (Malaga, 30m); Carvajal (Leverkusen, 6.5m), Casimiro (Sao Paulo, 6m)

OUT 110m Ozil (Arsenal, 50m); Higuain (Napoli, 38.5m), Raul Albiol (Napoli, 12m); Callejon (Napoli, 9.5m); Pedro Leon (Getafe, 6m)

DYNAMO MOSCOW
48.4M/£42.1M

IN 67.4m Kokorin (Anzhi, 19m, August 2013); Denisov (Anzhi, 15m); Zhirkov (Anzhi, 11m); Samba (Anzhi, 10m); Gabulov (Anzhi, 7m); Ionov (Anzhi, 5m); Dyadyun (Rubin, 0.4m)

OUT 19m Kokorin (Anzhi, 19m, June 2013)

DYNAMO KIEV
41.5M/£36.1M

IN 46.5m Mbokani (Anderlecht, 11m); Belhanda (Montpellier, 11m); Dragovic (Basle, 9m); Lens (PSV, 9m); Tremoulinas (Bordeaux, 6.5m)

OUT 5m Raffael (Bor M'Gladbach, 5m)

SOUTHAMPTON
39.6M/£34.4M

IN 39.6m Osvaldo (Roma, 15.1m); Wanyama (Celtic, 14.5m); Lovren (Lyon, 10m)

OUT none

ARSENAL
38.6M/£29.2M

IN 50m Ozil (Real Madrid, 44m)

OUT 10.4m Gervinho (Roma, 8m), Mannone (Sunderland, 2.4m)

CARDIFF
38.3M/£33.3M

IN 38.3m Medel (Sevilla, 13m); Caulker (Tottenham, 9.2m); Cornelius (Copenhagen, 8.7m); Odemwingie (West Brom, 2.9m); Theophile-Catherine (Rennes, 2.5m); Brayford (Derby, 1.8m); Moore (Brentford, 0.2m)

OUT none

MANCHESTER UNITED
33.8M/£29.4M

IN 33.8m Fellaini (Everton, 32m); Varela (Penarol, 1.8m)

OUT none

BARCELONA
29.9M/£26.0M

IN 57m Neymar (Santos, 57m)

OUT 27.1m Thiago Alcantara (Bayern, 25m); David Villa (Atletico Madrid 2.1m)

FENERBAHCE
27.0M/£23.5M

IN 30.25m Emenike (Spartak Moscow, 13m); Alper Potuk (Eskisehirspor, 7.25m); Bruno Alves (Zenit, 5.5m); Kadlec (Leverkusen, 4.5m)

OUT 3.25m Sezer Ozturk (Besiktas, 1.5m), Orhan Sam (Kasimpasa, 1m); Serkan (Caykur Rizespor, 0.75m)

GALATASARAY
22.45M/£19.5M

IN 22.75m Bruma (Sporting Lisbon, 10m); Chedli (Lille, 6.3m); Felipe Melo (Juventus, 3.75m); Umut Bulut (Toulouse, 2.7m)

OUT 0.3m Kazim (Bursaspor, 0.3m)

NORWICH
24.9M/£21.7M

IN 28.5m Van Wolfswinkel (Sporting Lisbon, 10m); Hooper (Celtic, 6.3m); Fer (Twente, 5.5m); Olsson (Blackburn, 2.9m); Redmond (Birmingham, 2.3m); Garrido (Lazio, 1.5m)

OUT 3.6m Holt (Wigan, 2.2m); Vaughan (Huddersfield, 0.85m); Barnett (Wigan, 0.55m)

BAYERN MUNICH
24.0M/£20.9M

IN 62m Gotze (Dortmund, 37m); Thiago Alcantara (Barcelona, 25m)

OUT 38m Luiz Gustavo (Wolfsburg, 17.5m); Mario Gomez (Fiorentina, 15.5m); Emre Can (Leverkusen, 5m)

LIVERPOOL
23.9M/£20.8M

IN 54.9m Sakho (Paris Saint-Germain, 19m); Mignolet (Sunderland, 10.6m); Iago Aspas (Celta Vigo, 9m); Tiago Ilori (Sporting Lisbon, 8.3m); Luis Alberto (Sevilla, 8m)

OUT 31.0 Carroll (West Ham, 17.5m); Downing (West Ham, 5.8m); Shelvey (Swansea, 5.5m); Spearing (Bolton, 2.2m)

WEST HAM
23.3M/£20.3M

IN 23.3m Carroll (Liverpool, 17.5m); Downing (Liverpool, 5.8m)

OUT none

INTERNAZIONALE
23M/20.0M

IN 28.3m Belfodil (Parma, 7.5m); Silvestre (Palermo, 6m); Icardi (Sampdoria, 6m); Taider (Bologna, 5.5m); Capello (Bologna, 2.5m); Mudingayi (Bologna, 0.8m)

OUT 5.3m Donati (Leverkusen, 3m); Caldirola (Werder Bremen, 2.3m)

SWANSEA
22.8M/£19.8

IN 22.8 Bony (Vitesse, 13.9m); Shelvey (Liverpool, 5.5m); Jordi Amat (Espanyol, 2.9m); Pozuelo (Betis, 0.5m)

OUT none

Coup...Arsenal signed Ozil from Real Madrid on deadline day

he can afford to pay €100m for Bale. Madrid announced record revenues of €520.9m for 2012-13. That enabled them to be the biggest spenders of the summer transfer market – in gross terms, spending a total of €181.5m euros, more than the next highest spenders, Monaco, on €161.2m.

However, Madrid also sold, among others, Mesut Ozil to Arsenal and Gonzalo Higuain to Napoli, which reduced their net spending to a more modest €65.5m.

The biggest net spenders were actually Monaco, whose billionaire Russian owner Dmitry Rybolovlev spent heavily on new recruits following their promotion back to France's Ligue 1.

Once net spending is taken into account, familiar trends emerge. Most of the big spending was done either by foreign owners or English clubs, or both.

Monaco, Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester City and Chelsea lead our table of net spenders (see previous page).

One exception is Dynamo Moscow, whose owner VTB, Russia's state bank, took advantage of Anzhi's financial meltdown to bring in new players.

Monaco have yet to come under the scrutiny of UEFA's financial fairplay (FFP) regulations as they are not playing in European competition. But Platini says that UEFA's FFP committee will be waiting to examine their books.

"The devil is in the detail," he said. "And we're trying to get to grips with this devil. We've had discussions with clubs for years, but the clubs have lots of lawyers, they're very competent people and they believe they're in the right.

While PSG and Manchester City have sponsorship deals with companies allied closely to their owners. It remains to be seen whether these deals will pass UEFA's "market-rate" test.

"Our committees will decide in May next year to check on their goodwill and validity and this will lead to decisions that will end up in court eventually," said Platini.

City have also benefitted from the other major source of money in the transfer market: the English Premier League's record TV deal, in which clubs will earn a total of £5.5billion over the next three years.

Half of the top 20 net-spending clubs were English, including middle-ranking outfits Norwich City and Southampton, promoted in 2011 and 2012 respectively and keen to consolidate their position. Newly-promoted Cardiff also spent heavily, spending more than Manchester United.

Southampton's purchases included Pablo Osvaldo from Roma and Victor Wanyama from Celtic – players who many expected to be playing Champions League football this season.

> "We are not trying to kill football. We are trying to help football"
> Michel Platini

In charge...Platini

The Bale deal enabled Tottenham to spend more than €120m on new players but still record a net spend of just €2.4m. The north London club broke their transfer record on a number of occasions through the summer, signing Paulinho from Corinthians (€19m), Roberto Soldado (Valencia, €30m) and Erik Lamela (Roma, €30m) as well as Christian Eriksen (Ajax, €13.5m) and Etienne Capoue (Toulouse, €11m).

Cavani to PSG

Napoli spent €87m on new players as Rafael Benitez reshaped the club following the departure of previous coach Walter Mazzari to Internazionale. But most of their spending was covered by the €64.5m sale of Edinson Cavani to Paris Saint-Germain, with other sales such as Mario Santana to Genoa and Luca Cigarini to Atalanta reducing Napoli's net spend to around €14m.

Overall, Italian clubs, like their Spanish counterparts, received more in sales than they themselves spent.

The exodus of players from La Liga to other European leagues was one of the themes of the summer transfer market. Even Barcelona covered half of the purchase of Neymar with the sale of Thiago Alcantara to Bayern Munich.

The sales continued right up until deadline day, with highly-rated French midfielder Geoffrey Kondogbia leaving Sevilla to join Monaco in a €20m deal.

Sevilla were one of the biggest net sellers of the summer, along with Porto and Roma. Big-name clubs who balanced the books included Shakhtar Donetsk and last season's Champions League finalists Borussia Dortmund.

Dortmund lost key midfielder Mario Gotze when Bayern paid his €37m release clause. But that enabled them to spend €50m on Henrikh Mkhitaryan, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Sokratis Papastathopoulos.

Similarly, Shakhtar spent €67m on a new wave of Brazilians, including Bernard for €25m from Atletico Mineiro. But their spending was more than covered by the sale of Mkhitaryan to Dortmund and the €40m received from Manchester City for Fernandinho.

Porto spent more than €30m on new players, including Mexicans Diego Reyes (America, €7m) and Hector Herrera (Pachuca, €8m). But the €70m received from Monaco for James Rodriguez and Joao Moutinho left them with a hefty surplus.

Hot shot...new PSG striker Cavani

Similarly, Roma spent around €60m, but they received a whopping €90m in player sales, notably Erik Lamela (Tottenham, €30m), Marquinhos (PSG, €31.4m), Pablo Osvaldo (Southampton, €15.1m) and Maarten Stekelenburg (Fulham, €5.6m).

Roma's transfer strategy mirrored that of a majority of Europe's clubs. What money they did spend was provided by a tiny elite of big-spending clubs for whom money is no object. WS

• For all the summer's transfer-window moves go to http://www.worldsoccer.com/features/transfers-summer-2013 or bit.ly/15ZGQvt

Dispatches

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

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BRAZIL
At the midway point in the Brazilian championship, Atletico Paranaense have surprised a few people and sit fourth.

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AUSTRALIA
As the ninth A-League prepares to get under way, the domestic game continues to go from strength to strength.

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ROMANIA
There is no love lost between neighbours Romania and Hungary as they meet in a World Cup qualifier.

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PUERTO RICO
After two seasons in the NASL, the future of the Caribbean island's only professional team is on hold.

TIM VICKERY
in Rio de Janeiro

Changing fortunes

Atletico Paranaense in fine form at half-way stage

In 2005, Sao Paulo met Atletico Paranaense in the first all-Brazilian Libertadores Cup Final. It looked like an unequal struggle – the country's giants against a provincial upstart – and so it proved, with Sao Paulo winning 5-1 on aggregate. The following year, coach Muricy Ramalho took over and led Sao Paulo to three consecutive national titles, while Atletico faced an ongoing struggle against relegation – a battle which they lost at the end of 2011.

Going in to this year's Brazilian championship the disparity between the two clubs appeared to remain. True, Sao Paulo's Libertadores campaign was a disaster, but they had played well before the back end of last year, winning the Sudamericana Cup. And while they had lost Lucas Moura to Paris Saint-Germain, at least they had added highly rated playmaker Paulo Henrique Ganso to a talented squad. They looked like title contenders. Atletico Paranaense, meanwhile, had won promotion at the first attempt. But they were left without a home as their stadium is currently closed for World Cup work and many saw them as relegation candidates.

As the competition reached the half-way stage, it does not look that way at all. After 19 rounds Atletico were in fourth place, on course to qualify for next year's Libertadores, while Sao Paulo were in the relegation zone, having already sacked two well-respected coaches in Ney Franco and Paulo Autori. The fans got their wish when Ramalho was brought back with the mission of steering the club to safety in the second half of the campaign.

Out of his depth

However, the solid defence and set-piece based football with which Ramalho won his three consecutive titles may no longer be good enough. He won the 2011 Libertadores with Santos, helping groom Neymar along the way, but the enormity of his failure against Barcelona in that year's Club World Cup Final can hardly be overstated. With six months to plan, Ramalho looked embarrassingly out of his depth as Barcelona took his team to pieces without breaking sweat.

And Sao Paulo's repeated coaching changes of recent years are surely part of the club's problem. All of this turbulence is a marked contrast to the all-conquering side of a few years ago. Sao Paulo were then held up as a model of stability, of rational planning and cool-headed analysis. They were hailed – and often enthusiastically self-proclaimed – as an exception in the chaotic world of Brazilian football.

The club today seem mired in an institutional crisis. Presidential elections are on the way, which is a further cause of behind-the-scenes conflict, and current president Juvenal Juvencio is often criticised for his old-style authoritarianism. There are even whispers that club legend, captain and goalscoring goalkeeper Rogerio Ceni has too much influence.

Making things worse for Sao Paulo has been watching the growth of local rivals Corinthians, who are set to move into the city's World Cup stadium next year. Sao Paulo's Morumbi ground had originally been earmarked to stage 2014 matches, but the club were outmanoeuvred politically – in part because they were seen as opponents of the administration of the Brazilian FA.

Atletico Paranaense, meanwhile, have also taken a rebel stance, one which has surely played a role in the success of their current campaign. The club refused to take part with their first team in their local State Championship (Parana). Instead of spending four months disputing a competition described by club president Mario Petraglia as "a con", Atletico had time for a proper pre-season and are clearly reaping the benefits. Opponents are pointing out that the team seem well prepared physically. Atletico have no notable stars. Their 38-year-old attacking midfielder Paulo Baier remains the inspiration, but lanky striker Marcelo is creating a good impression, while lively little Ederson is the competition's top goalscorer. It will be fascinating to see whether other teams will be tempted to follow their example and boycott the state championships.

Atletico Paranaense would be most unlikely title winners, though. The battle would seem to be between free-scoring Cruzeiro and Botafogo, who are still spearheaded by Clarence Seedorf. Gremio, with a strong squad, are hovering ominously, while Internacional could be a threat and Corinthians are also lurking.

Cracking form

Luiz Felipe Scolari's national side enjoyed a thoroughly satisfactory September, hammering Australia 6-0 before coming from behind to beat Portugal 3-1 in Boston. Neymar looked in cracking form, and another highlight was the successful re-incorporation of Ramires, allowing Brazil to switch from their usual 4-2-3-1 to a formation something more like a 4-3-3, with Luiz Gustavo holding and both Paulinho and Ramires breaking forward.

With Neymar and Bernard wide, and Jo – deputising for the injured Fred – efficient at centre-forward, Brazil had too many attacking options for both opponents to contain. WS

> The solid defence and set-piece based football with which Ramalho won three consecutive titles may no longer be good enough

Clash...Zezinho of Atletico Paranaense holds off Fluminense's Eduardo

Back at Sao Paulo...Ramalho

BRAZIL SERIE A...THE LAST 10 SEASONS

	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP	THIRD
2003	Cruzeiro	Santos	Sao Paulo
2004	Santos	Atletico Paranaense	Sao Paulo
2005	Corinthians	Internacional	Goias
2006	Sao Paulo	Internacional	Gremio
2007	Sao Paulo	Santos	Flamengo
2008	Sao Paulo	Gremio	Cruzeiro
2009	Flamengo	Internacional	Sao Paulo
2010	Fluminense	Cruzeiro	Corinthians
2011	Corinthians	Vasco da Gama	Fluminense
2012	Fluminense	Atletico Mineiro	Gremio

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LES MURRAY
In Sydney

Going from strength to strength

New TV deal set to help A-League grow again this season

Not yet a decade old and, having negotiated all manner of bumps along the way, the A-League is looking forward to what is expected to be its most successful season yet.

When Sydney, spearheaded by Alessandro Del Piero, meet Newcastle Jets on October 11, an A-League match will be seen live on free-to-air national television for the first time. Up until now, the league has been the exclusive property of the Rupert Murdoch-owned pay-TV provider Fox Sports. In the new broadcasting deal, sealed for the next four years, Fox and free TV network SBS will be joint broadcasters, with Fox covering all games and SBS beaming out one live game per week.

Given that Fox's penetration is only around 35 per cent of households, the new deal will give unprecedented exposure to the A-League. Additionally, the new TV revenue will cover the salary cap costs of all 10 clubs, relieving them of much financial pressure.

The league's TV ratings and attendances grew significantly last season and the signs are that the growth will continue. Added TV audiences will be one cause, but there are others.

Stunning story

A key platform for growth is the stunning story of Western Sydney Wanderers' debut last season. Representing Sydney's vast, multicultural western suburbs, which are inhabited by 2.5million people from 120 different cultures, the Wanderers blew the league away in their first campaign, both with their performances and their appeal. They ended up top of the table and only lost the Grand Final 1-0 to Central Coast Mariners.

And it was similar on the terraces. After drawing around 8,000 to their first home game, by the season's end Wanderers had trouble coping with the demand to fill their 22,000-capacity stadium. Work will start soon to expand the arena to hold at least 25,000 – and even that may not to be enough.

The Wanderers' fairy tale gripped the nation, not in the least due to their colourful fans, the "Red and Black Bloc". The RBB, whose ability to create an atmosphere is unmatched in the A-League, got more media space than the club's players themselves.

On the technical side, the A-League was of a higher quality last season than at any time in its eight-year history. A long way from its advent in 2005, when most teams were content to simply boot the ball long up the channels, just about every team last season tried to play a passing game, and this is set to continue.

Much is expected of Adelaide United under former Barcelona staff coach Josep Gombau. Ange Postecoglou, who coached Brisbane Roar to two titles with his flowing football, continues his work at the league's biggest club Melbourne Victory. Perth Glory, Sydney, Newcastle Jets and Melbourne Heart are among the other signed-up members of the "passing game" club.

Box-office star

Del Piero, the A-League's box-office star, will again impact the league at least in commercial terms. As he did last season, when he packed them in whenever and wherever Sydney played, he will make money for everyone as well as, of course, himself. But another positive will be the return to his home land, now for the second time, of Harry Kewell, this time for Melbourne Heart.

The former Leeds United, Liverpool and Galatasaray star enjoys immense popularity in Australia and he, too, will add to the numbers. And his new role as a chief weapon for Heart, local rivals for his former club Melbourne Victory, will be a fascinating new dimension to the competition.

The pair meet in the first round of fixtures, on October 12. WS

Fanatical...Western Sydney Wanderers' "Red and Black Bloc" get behind their team

A-LEAGUE CLUBS 2013-14

> "This ticks one of the boxes on my bucket list. I've never had the opportunity to be a captain, but to be captain of a club is massive honour"
> Melbourne Heart's new skipper, Harry Kewell

Honour...Kewell

KEY DATES

Season starts
October 11, 2013
Season ends
April 13, 2014
Finals series
April 17 to May 4, 2014

Ready...Western Sydney Wanderers (in white) take on Shimizu S-Pulse in a pre-season friendly in Japan

JAMES MONTAGUE
in Bucharest

Neighbours' border dispute

A World Cup qualifier opens up old wounds

The Animal was angry and The Animal wanted to make them pay. Outside the Arena Nationale in Bucharest, a group of around 100 men was marching purposefully with a Romanian flag, burning red flares and chanting abusive songs. At the back – short and powerful, his head shaved and his arms covered in tattoos – The Animal was coolly watching his parade.

"Between Romania and Hungary there is a lot of tension," said The Animal, who is one of three leaders of Steaua Bucharest's ultras group.

Around him, his younger followers jumped up and down excitedly, screaming in our direction. The Animal calmed them instantly with a raised arm.

"When we played them in Hungary it was with no supporters. Now the Hungarians come here and cause a lot of destruction on the streets. We want to find them to fight with them, but the police stop us. It's crazy. They stop us but they don't stop them?"

Earlier in the day, thousands of Hungarian fans had descended on Bucharest. A special train, painted with the face of Ferenc Puskas, arrived at Bucharest's Garede Nord station festooned with flags and red flares for a 2014 World Cup qualifier between Romania and Hungary. It was a vital game for both teams. With Holland all but qualified for Brazil, Hungary sat in second place, one point ahead of Romania, and in the box seat for the play-off spot in the group.

During the day the Hungarian fans had filled Bucharest's recently renovated old town, smashing up bars and terrorising tourists. The madness was shown live on Romanian TV. The police had to fire tear gas before corralling them on to buses to the stadium, where they could be managed easier. Helicopters hovered over the stadium, keeping track of their arrival as hundreds of Romanian military police controlled their route to the stands.

But fear over missing out on Brazil wasn't the full story. The two neighbouring countries have a fractious history, one that has come to the fore in recent years, and one which this match had exposed for all to see.

"It's our history together," the Animal explained. "They want Transylvania. They want Romanian land. These Hungarian people..." he said, before correcting himself. "These Hungarians fucks need to go home."

The Animal and his followers marched off towards the Hungarian end of the stadium.

> "We want to find them to fight with them, but the police stop us. It's crazy"
> Steaua Bucharest ultra leader 'The Animal'

World War One dispute

The root of this enmity can be found in the post World War One settlement that carved up the defeated Austro-Hungarian empire. Hungary lost over three quarters of its territory to its surrounding countries, including Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine.

But it was Romania that benefited most, taking Transylvania, where as many as 1.5million Romanians of Hungarian descent – many of whom speak Hungarian as their first language – still live.

During communism, tensions had largely been kept in check. But the 2010 election of a more nationalistic government in Budapest reignited these old grievances. One of the first laws they passed handed citizenship – and with it voting rights – to Hungarians living abroad. It was a move that angered Hungary's neighbours for encouraging their citizens to look towards Budapest rather than their own capitals.

The rise of the right has also been mirrored on the terraces in Hungary. The first World Cup match between Hungary and Romania in March, a 2-2 draw, was played behind closed doors due to anti-Semitic chanting when Israel played a friendly there last year.

"That empty stadium was a clear sign of radicalism in Hungarian football," explains Voros Szabolcs, who is the foreign correspondent for the *Magyar Hirlap* daily newspaper in Hungary.

"I was at that match. There were

Pic: James Montague

Confrontation...Romanian ultras in aggressive mood outside the Arena Nationale

Travelling support...Hungarians arriving at Bucharest station before the game against Romania

TRANSYLVANIA – AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Hungary and Romania both have claims to the region of Transylvania

Strong...Romania's Razvan Rat feels the full force of a challenge from Daniel Bode of Hungary

Opener...Marica (right) celebrates his goal with team-mate Alexandru Maxim

20,000 people outside the stadium and we could hear voices, we could hear the screams of the trainers. Sadly there were anti-Romanian chants, as usual."

In the weekend before the Romania-Hungary game, three Hungarian league teams were fined a total of 1.2 million forints (£3,000) for anti-Romanian and anti-Slovakian chants. "OK, it happens, and the clubs are fighting against it," explains Tamas Sztancsik, who is a spokesperson for the Hungarian Football Federation. "We are making clear efforts to push this back."

In a warm-up game against the Czech Republic the fans chanted "Transylvania is Hungarian!" and promised to mount an "invasion" of Romania before the game in Bucharest. They also flew the Szekely flag, the flag of a historically Hungarian dominated area in Romania that many Hungarians would like to see gain autonomy. Others, like the ultra right-wing Jobbik party, which has been accused of following anti-Semitic policies, would like to see it subsumed into a "Greater Hungary".

"Such words should be condemned, they do not belong on a football pitch," said Romania's foreign minister, Titus Corlatean, trying to take the sting out of the match.

"Let's not hide here; extremist attitudes exist everywhere, they happen in Romania as well. The best answer will be to beat the Hungarians at football."

On the outskirts of Budapest, in a brand new, state-of-the-art training complex, Hungary coach Sandor Egervari was trying to shield his players from the politics of the occasion. "The game is important for us because, as you say in football language, it is a kind of a six-point game," he said. "It is also important because of the two nations' historic past. It was full of problems. We know that the atmosphere in Bucharest will be very special."

> "We haven't been to a World Cup since 1986 – I was born in 1987 – so I don't remember anything growing up"
> Hungary goalkeeper Adam Bogdan

Tense...police clash with Hungarian fans in the ground before kick-off

It's rare that Hungary find themselves with a chance of qualifying for a major tournament. They haven't qualified for a World Cup or European Championship for 27 years. You have to go back six decades to a time when Puskas and his Magical Magyars were the best team in the world, destroying England 6-3 at Wembley.

As Szabolcs had explained to me: "It's sad that the national team is, as we say, 'under the bottom of a frog'." But qualification for Brazil would be an important step in stopping the rot.

"We haven't been to a World Cup since 1986 – I was born in 1987 – so I don't remember anything growing up," explained Adam Bogdan, the Bolton Wanderers goalkeeper. "I was watching different teams in the World Cup, supporting different teams like England. This match means everything for football fans in Hungary."

To change that, Hungary would need a result in the toughest of venues. "It will be hostile," Bogdan said. "It is no secret that we don't have the best relationships between the two countries, but it is our biggest derby against Romania."

Hostile atmosphere

And it certainly was hostile in Bucharest. The Animal and his ultras never made it to the Hungarian fans – the huge amount of police made sure of that – with some Romanian media reporting that Steaua fans had instead fought with Dinamo Bucharest fans.

The Hungarian followers had been kettled into their section of the stadium. They were greeted by an ocean of Romanian Tricolor flags and both anthems received zero respect. But it took just two minutes for Romania to take the lead, with Hungary defender Richard Guzmics slipping and allowing Ciprian Marica to score. A second was added before half-time and a third at the death. By then the Hungary fans were quiet, their Romanian counterparts chanting joyously that the Hungarians should go home. Later, a political party that represents the Hungarian minority in Romania wrote a letter of complaint to FIFA over the chants.

Beaten, the Hungarians retreated to the train station. There was little more trouble, their World Cup dream seemingly over. But then, a few days later, Romania lost at home to Turkey and Hungary annihilated Estonia.

With two games to go they were back in second. Hungarian football might yet remove itself from "the bottom of the frog", but The Animal will not be happy. WS

Islanders set for tough times

After two years in the NASL, the club's future is on hold

Battle...Chris Nurse (right) holds off Michael Stephens of LA Galaxy in the CONCACAF Champions League

Football's fragile place in Puerto Rico's sporting culture has been damaged by Puerto Rico Islanders' NASL franchise being placed on hold. And after missing the 2013 season, the club now concedes that a return to the NASL is unlikely before 2015 due to financial problems.

"We are reorganising," explains Islanders vice-president Jorge Pierluisi. "The best scenario for a return would be the clausura in August 2014, but most probably it will be 2015."

The club's demise was certainly a surprise to the players. Anthony Vazquez, who was in his first season as a pro and had broken into the national team, said: "We finished last year thinking it was a normal end of season, then rumours started appearing on the Internet."

Like any other Puerto Rican wanting to play professionally, Vazquez has had to leave his homeland as all 96 clubs on the island are amateur. Now with Pittsburgh Riverhounds in the USA, he added: "I would come back if I could. Once an Islander, always an Islander."

The original Islanders franchise, which was formed in 1995, was short-lived, but the side was revived in 2003 and proved successful, winning the USSF Division 2 Championship, two Caribbean Football Union Club Championships and reaching the semi-finals of the 2008 CONCACAF Champions League.

Although the Federacion Puertorriqueoa de Futbol (FPF) supported the Islanders, it never took a financial stake. The club was owned by a disparate group of local businessmen and helped financially by the government.

Between 2007 and 2011, the Islanders were successfully managed by former Northern Ireland striker Colin Clarke, who traces the club's current problems back to the country's 2012 general election.

"I had a great experience and the Islanders did nothing but good for soccer on the island, but the federation never got behind it financially," says Clarke.

"The support was there and it needed to be looked after, but it wasn't – and that was the disappointing thing.

"The team was supported by the last government, but the new one didn't like it and that was the start of the downfall. That was the problem, egos got in the way."

During Clarke's tenure, big matches against Mexican sides or LA Galaxy drew crowds of over 10,000 to the Islanders' ground in Bayamon. Under Adrian Whitbread, Clarke's assistant and successor, the Islanders finished third in the 2012 NASL regular season, but suffered off the pitch.

The club moved from Bayamon to the Juan Ramon Loubriel Stadium, which had benefited from a US$7million refurbishment but was ill-prepared for professional football.

"The facilities could not handle operational matters," admitted Pierluisi. "We couldn't even charge admission properly or have concessions, which was a blow."

A new franchise

Pierluisi and the other owners are currently talking to the government, the NASL and the FPF, but if the Islanders were to be revived the club would be considered a new franchise.

Financial support from the FPF certainly seems unlikely and its president, Eric Labrador, states: "Although the FPF endorse the Islanders, this is a private organisation that determines internally the fate of the organisation."

> "What we need is a big player in the soccer industry to come to the island and understand we have a big brand"
> Puerto Rico Islanders vice-president Jorge Pierluisi

Labrador ranks football fifth behind baseball, basketball, boxing and volleyball, but acknowledges the debt owed to the Islanders, saying: "The Islanders marked a change in the culture of football here. The basis of the national team came out of the Islanders."

Labrador and the FPF could soon face a bigger challenge as a plebiscite late last year on the island's links with the USA revealed 61 per cent of Puerto Ricans support becoming the 51st state.

If that materialised, the FPF's status as a fully fledged member of FIFA would surely be untenable. Leaving FIFA would then remove a vital source of outside funding for the FPF and isolate Puerto Rico's footballers even further. WS

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Puerto Rico is a Caribbean island and self-governing province of the United States. Residents have had US citizenship since 1917.

Population 3.7 million
Size 13,790 sq km
Capital San Juan
Languages Spanish, English
Religion Catholic

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CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2013-14

Wembley winners...Bayern Munich celebrate their victory over Borussia Dortmund in May

Bayern bid to make history in 2013-14

CAN BAYERN MUNICH retain the title they won in such thrilling style at Wembley last season? History suggests that it will be tough. Since the competition mutated into the modern, money-fuelled format in the mid-1990s, no team has managed to record back-to-back triumphs. Indeed, the last team to win successive European Cups was Milan, in 1989 and 1990.

Bayern's progress under new coach Guardiola will be one of the season's most intriguing plotlines. With so many other sides having strengthened their squads over the summer, or having added coaches with direct experience of winning the competition, picking a winner is virtually impossible.

Our 32-page guide is full of familiar names, as well as others (Real Sociedad, Austria Vienna and Viktoria Plzen), whose qualification adds to the diversity of Europe's most enthralling club competition. *Gavin Hamilton*

Contributors: Paddy Agnew (Juventus, Milan, Napoli), Sam Beckwith (Viktoria Plzen), Nick Bidwell (Bayer Leverkusen, Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Schalke), Dan Brennan (Celtic), John Chapman (Anderlecht), Klaas-Jan Droppert (Ajax), Lou Economopoulos (Olympiakos), Victor Gusev (CSKA Moscow, Zenit), Jim Holden (Copenhagen), Brian Homewood (Austria Vienna, Basle), Howard Johnson (Marseille, Paris Saint-Germain), Sid Lowe (Atletico Madrid, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Real Sociedad), Pedro Pinto (Benfica, Porto), Emanuel Rosu (Steaua Bucharest), Oleg Zaderkovsky (Shakhtar Donetsk.)

32 TEAMS

GROUP A
47 Bayer Leverkusen
58 Manchester United
66 Real Sociedad
68 Shakhtar Donetsk

GROUP B
53 Copenhagen
55 Galatasaray
56 Juventus
65 Real Madrid

GROUP C
41 Anderlecht
49 Benfica
62 Olympiakos
63 Paris Saint-Germain

GROUP D
48 Bayern Munich
54 CSKA Moscow
57 Manchester City
70 Viktoria Plzen

GROUP E
46 Basle
52 Chelsea
67 Schalke
69 Steaua Bucharest

GROUP F
42 Arsenal
50 Borussia Dortmund
59 Marseille
61 Napoli

GROUP G
43 Atletico Madrid
44 Austria Vienna
64 Porto
71 Zenit

GROUP H
40 Ajax
45 Barcelona
51 Celtic
60 Milan

AJAX

Qualified directly for group stage as Eredivisie champions
Winners four times (1971, 1972, 1973 and 1995)

HOLLAND — GROUP H

COACH

Frank DE BOER
Age 43 (15.05.70)
Former defender won last season clinched his third consecutive title as coach. Loyal to the club philosophy of developing new talent.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Jasper CILLESSEN — **Age 24 (22.04.89)**
Despite making his Holland debut this summer he has not been able to surpass Vermeer. Signed from NEC in 2010.

Kenneth VERMEER — **Age 27 (10.01.86)**
An understudy to many others in the past but now first choice. He is a good shotstopper and an international regular.

PLUS: (30) **Mickey VAN DER HART** (Age 19, 13.06.94)

DEFENDERS

Daley BLIND — **Age 23 (09.03.90)**
Left-back and the son of ex-captain Danny Blind. A scapegoat in the past, he was among the best performers last season.

Nicolai BOILESEN (Den) — **Age 21 (16.02.92)**
Left-back who loves to get forward, but he has suffered with hamstring injuries over the past two years.

Niklas MOISANDER (Fin) — **Age 26 (29.09.85)**
Came through the youth ranks but left for PEC Zwolle and AZ before returning six years later.

Mike VAN DER HOORN — **Age 21 (15.10.92)**
Centre-half who was signed from Utrecht on a four-year deal in July after playing at the Euro Under-21s.

Ricardo VAN RHIJN — **Age 22 (13.06.91)**
Right-back who is often compared to his predecessor, Gregory Van der Wiel. Must improve defensively.

Joel VELTMAN — **Age 21 (15.01.92)**
Home-grown central defender who signed a deal in August keeping him at the club until 2017.

PLUS: (36) **Riechedly BAZOER** (Hol, Age 16, 12.10.96), (24) **Stefano DENSWIL** (Age 20, 07.05.93), (27) **Ruben LIGEON** (Age 21, 24.05.92)

MIDFIELDERS

Siem DE JONG — **Age 24 (28.01.89)**
Swiss-born club captain who will miss the early games with a collapsed lung. Often plays up front when Sigthorsson is injured.

Lerin DUARTE — **Age 23 (11.08.90)**
Of Cape Verdean descent, he was called into Holland's national squad at the end of last season. Signed from Heracles in August for €2.5m.

Davy KLAASSEN — **Age 20 (21.02.93)**
Attacking midfielder whose breakthrough was delayed by a complicated groin injury. Scored on his debut against NEC in November 2011.

Christian POULSEN (Den) — **Age 33 (28.02.80)**
Came from Evian last year to cover Ajax's lack of experience and brings balance to the team, particularly in Europe.

Lasse SCHONE (Den) — **Age 27 (27.05.86)**
Playmaker who was signed from NEC last year. His creativity is a boost when things aren't going smoothly for the team.

Thulani SERERO (SAf) — **Age 23 (11.04.90)**
Joined from nursery club Ajax Cape Town in 2011. Criticised by South Africans for dropping out of the national squad with injury concerns.

PLUS: (26) **Eyong ENOH** (Cam, Age 27, 23.03.86), (37) **Stanislav LOBOTKA** (Slk, Age 18, 25.11.94), (38) **Dejan MELEG** (Ser, Age 18, 01.10.94)

FORWARDS

Lucas ANDERSEN (Den) — **Age 19 (13.09.94)**
Can play in midfield or on either wing. Signed for €1.5m last year from Danish side AaB, where he made his debut at 16.

BOJAN Krkic (Spa) — **Age 23 (28.08.90)**
On loan from Barcelona, with an option for another year. This is his third loan spell in as many seasons, having also been with Roma and then Milan last term.

Viktor FISCHER (Den) — **Age 19 (09.06.94)**
Lively left-winger with his mind set on goals. Seen as the eventual successor to Eriksen and is predicted to have a big future.

Danny HOESEN — **Age 22 (15.01.91)**
Previously with Fulham, but failed to make it in England and had loan spells at HJK Helsinki and Fortuna Sittard before moving to Ajax in the summer.

Tobias SANA (Swe) — **Age 24 (11.07.89)**
Was an instant hit after joining from Gothenburg last season. However, he has since faded away and lost his place.

Kolbeinn SIGTHORSSON (Ice) — **Age 23 (14.03.90)**
Despite his age, he is a bit injury prone and the three-matches-a-week schedule seems to be too much for him.

PLUS: (35) **Marvin HONER** (Ger, Age 19, 04.05.94)

ANALYSIS

Goals remain the same as ever for De Boer

They say you should never change a winning formula, so Ajax coach De Boer's goal for this season remains exactly the same as it was last term: clinch the Eredivisie title and still be competing in a European competition after the winter break and into the new year.

Although that is a realistic scenario considering what Ajax have delivered over the last two seasons, on both occasions the Amsterdam club have dropped into the Europa League after the Champions League group phase and then fell at the first hurdle. And that actually came in handy for the club's other goal, as Ajax traditionally have to play catch up in the title race after Christmas.

Forward looking...Ajax and Sigthorsson hope to compete at home and in Europe

The loss of Toby Alderweireld to Atletico Madrid and, in particular, Christian Eriksen to Tottenham Hotspur will certainly make things harder for Boer this campaign. However, he will be able to call on the services of Bojan, who was once regarded as one of Barcelona's great hopes.

The Spain international wants to give his career a new start on the right wing and he will take his place there in Ajax's trademark 4-3-3 system.

At centre-half, Van der Hoorn gets his chance as Alderweireld's replacement, while defender Boilesen and striker Andersen will both be knocking on the door and pushing their cases for more playing time.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

4-3-3

STADIUM

AMSTERDAM ARENA (53,031)
Built in 1996, Ajax's home has a retractable roof and is one of Europe's five-star venues. This means that it is suitable to host a Champions League Final – and last season it staged the Europa League showdown between Chelsea and Benfica.

ANDERLECHT

Qualified directly for group stage as Belgian champions
Best performance: reached the semi-finals in 1982 and 1986

BELGIUM — GROUP C

COACH

John VAN DEN BROM (Hol)
Age 46 (04.10.66)
Won the title in his first season despite a mid-season slump that brought him many critics. Under pressure again due to the current rebuilding.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Thomas KAMINSKI — **Age 20 (23.10.92)**
A regular in Belgium's Under-21 squad, he won't be happy on the bench for too long. Back after a loan at Leuven.

Silvio PROTO — **Age 30 (23.05.83)**
Anderlecht's most consistent player last season. Back in the thoughts of national coach Marc Wilmots.

PLUS: (33) **Davy ROEF** (Age 19, 06.02.94)

DEFENDERS

Olivier DESCHACHT — **Age 32 (16.02.81)**
Longest-serving player in the squad and an ex-captain. Has seen off many new left-backs to keep his place.

Guillaume GILLET — **Age 29 (09.03.84)**
Appointed captain in the summer, the right-back is also in the national squad.

Cheikhou KOUYATE (Sen) — **Age 23 (21.12.89)**
Senegal international who has recently been granted Belgian nationality – which may help him move to the Premier League in January.

Chancel MBEMBA — **Age 19 (08.08.94)**
Belgo-Congolese defender who is the third-choice centre-back. He came to prominence in the NextGen series.

Fabrice N'SAKALA (Fra) — **Age 23 (21.07.90)**
The latest in the long line of left-backs to challenge Deschacht, the France Under-21 joined in the summer from Troyes.

Bram NUYTINCK (Hol) — **Age 23 (04.05.90)**
Centre-back who has been inconsistent for the past six months. Never afraid to voice his opinion.

PLUS (32) **Leander DENDONCKE** (Age 18, 15.04.95), (39) **Anthony VANDEN BORRE** (Age 25, 24.10.87)

MIDFIELDERS

Demy DE ZEEUW — **Age 30 (26.05.83)**
On loan from Spartak Moscow last season and has returned on a similar deal this term.

Sacha KLJESTAN (USA) — **Age 28 (09.09.85)**
Slowly but surely he has become a key element of the team. Does the hard work for those that are more talented.

Luka MILIVOJEVIC (Ser) — **Age 22 (07.04.91)**
Defensive midfielder who had 18 months at Red Star Belgrade before moving this summer.

Dennis PRAET — **Age 19 (14.05.94)**
Has been "the next big thing" for some time, but the hype looks to be weighing heavily on his shoulders.

Youri TIELEMANS — **Age 16 (07.05.97)**
Creative midfielder with a good engine who made his debut at 16 years and two months. Possesses a sound temperament and a powerful shot.

Fede VICO (Spa) — **Age 19 (04.07.94)**
Spain Under-20 signed from Cordoba for €1.5m – the highest ever fee received by the Spanish second division club.

PLUS (35) **Samy BOURARD** (Age 17, 29.03.96)

FORWARDS

Frank ACHEAMPONG (Gha) — **Age 19 (16.10.93)**
Has played for clubs on three continents and had a trial with Celtic before signing for Anderlecht. He's quick, strong and is a proven goalscorer.

Massimo BRUNO — **Age 19 (17.09.93)**
Strong-running winger who scores his fair share of goals and became first choice last season.

Zoro CYRIAC (IvC) — **Age 23 (15.08.90)**
Top scorer in the Ivorian league in 2008 but has struggled in Europe.

Aleksandar MITROVIC (Ser) — **Age 19 (16.09.94)**
Made his Serbia debut against Belgium in a World Cup qualifier. Signed from Partizan in August for a club record fee of €5m.

Matias SUAREZ — **Age 25 (09.05.88)**
Had three poor years at Anderlecht, then won the Golden Boot for 2012. A move to CSKA Moscow fell through due to injury concerns.

Ronald VARGAS (Ven) — **Age 26 (02.12.86)**
Scored heavily in his third season at Club Brugge and pushed to join Anderlecht, but has suffered with injuries since.

PLUS (36) **Oswal ALVAREZ** (Col, Age 18, 11.06.95), (34) **Nabil JAADI** (Age 17, 01.07.96), (12) **Andy MAJAR** (Hon, Age 20, 16.03.93)

ANALYSIS

A year too soon for Van Den Brom's young squad

If Anderlecht are to repeat last season's Belgian championship success, they will have to do it without senior players such as Lucas Biglia, Dieumerci Mbokani and Milan Jovanovic as the club are putting their faith in youth this term. But that doesn't mean they haven't invested.

A key player in his country's victory at the Euro Under-19s, Serbia striker Mitrovic was bought to replace Mbokani and, despite his tender years, the teenager is already regarded as a better player than the 27-year-old – who is now with Dynamo Kiev – because he is young and hungry.

The Brussels club have also signed teenager Vico from Cordoba, while academy graduates Dennis Praet and Massimo Bruno were regulars last term. The best of the lot, however, could turn out to be 16-year-old midfielder Tielemans, who is being called the club's best home-grown star since Vincent Kompany.

Silverware...Anderlecht beat Genk 1-0 in July's Belgian Super Cup

Scoring goals should not be a problem for the side, but if Anderlecht are to achieve anything in continental competition they must tighten up their rearguard, which is prone to leaking goals.

However, although the squad should be strong enough to make it three domestic titles in a row, the youngsters may need at least another 12 months before they can make their mark in Europe.

John Chapman

4-3-3

STADIUM

CONSTANT VANDEN STOCK STADIUM (21,000)
A distinct lack of atmosphere at Anderlecht's home games means that a trip to Brussels is not one to fear for opponents. Plans to increase the arena's capacity to 30,000 are still under discussion. Hosted a Euro 1972 semi-final.

ARSENAL

Finished fourth in the Premier League and beat Fenerbahce 5-0 on aggregate in the play-off round
Best performance: runners-up in 2006

ENGLAND — GROUP F

MANAGER

Arsene WENGER (Fra)
Age 63 (22.10.49)
The longest-serving coach in the season's Champions League by some distance, having been at Arsenal since September 1996.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Lukasz FABIANSKI (Pol)
Age 28 (18.04.85)
A rib injury curtailed a brief return to the first team last year. His position may be under threat with the season-long loan of Viviano from Palermo.

Wojciech SZCZESNY (Pol)
Age 22 (18.04.90)
First choice despite a dip in form last season. Father Maciej, a former Poland international, has been a vocal critic of Wenger.

PLUS: (13) **Emiliano VIVIANO** (Ita, Age 27, 01.12.85)

DEFENDERS

Kieran GIBBS
Age 23 (26.09.89)
Attacking left-back, unlucky with injuries and has yet to add to his two England caps. Identical twin Jaydon plays for non-league Aldershot Town.

Laurent KOSCIELNY (Fra)
Age 28 (10.08.85)
Has emerged as a key figure in central defence since joining from Lorient in 2010. Was also eligible to play for Poland via his grandfather.

Per MERTESACKER (Ger)
Age 28 (29.09.84)
Giant centre-back who took time to adapt to English football following a 2011 move from Bremen. Can struggle against pacy strikers.

Nacho MONREAL (Spa)
Age 27 (26.02.86)
International left-back who arrived from Malaga in January 2013 to challenge Gibbs. Born in Pamplona and started with Osasuna.

Bacary SAGNA (Fra)
Age 30 (14.02.83)
Dreadlocked right-back who can also play in the centre. Was expected to leave this summer but agreed a new 12-month deal.

Thomas VERMAELEN (Bel)
Age 27 (14.11.85)
Centre-back signed from Ajax in 2009. Club captain despite being dropped last season and injured at the start of this year's campaign.

PLUS: (25) **Carl JENKINSON** (Age 21, 08.02.92)

MIDFIELDERS

Mikel ARTETA (Spa)
Age 31 (26.03.82)
Elegant passer who was a deadline-day signing from Everton in 2011. Has only played one season in La Liga, in 2004-05 for Real Sociedad.

Santi CAZORLA (Spa)
Age 28 (13.12.84)
International winger who can play on either flank and is also effective when cutting inside. Snapped up from Malaga last summer.

Mathieu FLAMINI (Fra)
Age 29 (07.03.84)
Marseille-born defensive midfielder who made a surprise return to Arsenal this summer after five seasons at Milan.

Aaron RAMSEY (Wal)
Age 22 (26.12.90)
Wales captain who now looks fully recovered from the leg broken in six places against Stoke City in 2010.

Tomas ROSICKY (Cze)
Age 32 (04.10.80)
Injury-prone playmaker who is outstanding when fit. Could be edged out by Ozil's arrival. In the final year of his Arsenal contract.

Jack WILSHERE
Age 21 (01.01.92)
One of the great hopes of English football, technically gifted but fragile, having missed the entire 2011-12 season through injury.

PLUS: (24) **Abou DIABY** (Fra, Age 27, 11.05.86), (26) **Emmanuel FRIMPONG** (Gha, Age 21, 10.01.92)

FORWARDS

Nicklas BENDTNER (Den)
Age 25 (16.01.88)
Loaned to Juventus and Sunderland for the past two years. Wenger wanted to cancel his contract this summer but injuries forced the manager's hand.

Olivier GIROUD (Fra)
Age 26 (30.09.86)
Striker signed on the back of a brilliant season for Montpellier in 2012. Slowly making his mark in London, as Spurs fans will testify.

Alex OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN
Age 20 (15.08.93)
Winger facing a lengthy lay-off after being injured on the first day of the new season. Son of ex-England winger Mark Chamberlain.

Mesut OZIL (Ger)
Age 24 (15.10.88)
Brilliant playmaker signed from Real Madrid for a club record £42.5m. Nicknamed "Nemo" after the cartoon character.

Lukas PODOLSKI (Ger)
Age 28 (05.05.85)
Left-sided attacker who already has more than 100 caps for Germany. Will miss much of the autumn with a hamstring injury.

Theo WALCOTT
Age 24 (16.03.89)
The England winger signed a new contract last season which, until the arrival of Mesut Ozil, made him Arsenal's highest-paid player.

PLUS: (22) **Yaya SANOGO** (Fra, Age 20, 27.01.93)

ANALYSIS

Ozil could be a game-changer for Gunners

After a summer fraught with frustration over a perceived lack of transfer activity, Arsene Wenger pulled a rabbit out of the hat with the deadline-day signing of Ozil from Real Madrid for a club record £42.5m.

Arsenal's squad had needed, and still needs, strengthening elsewhere – notably in central defence, defensive midfield and attack – but the exciting German midfielder will give their football a new dimension.

Ozil's arrival gave Arsenal a huge boost after a summer in which the club had missed out on a number of big-name signings, including Gonzalo Higuain and Luis Suarez, with Wenger and chief executive Ivan Gazidis having stated their intention to spend heavily on the squad if needed.

Play-off hero...Aaron Ramsey scores at the Emirates to complete the rout of Fenerbahce

They came through a potential tricky encounter with Fenerbahce in the play-off round – much to UEFA's relief – but suffered early-season injuries to the likes of Vermaelen, Oxlade-Chamberlain and Podolski.

With Diaby still sidelined, the squad remains on the light side, and Wenger may even be forced to blood one or two of the club's talented teenagers.

Much will depend on the form and fitness of Wilshere. How he dovetails with Ozil in a 4-2-3-1 set-up will be crucial to Arsenal's chances of progressing from a tough group.

Gavin Hamilton

4-3-3

STADIUM

EMIRATES STADIUM (60,361)
Arsenal moved down the road from Highbury in 2006 but they have yet to win a trophy since setting up home here. The crowd pay some of the highest ticket prices in England and are not afraid to show their frustration with Wenger if things go awry.

ATLETICO MADRID

Qualified directly for group stage as third-placed team in La Liga
Best performance: runners-up in 1974

SPAIN — GROUP G

COACH

Diego SIMEONE (Arg)
Age 43 (28.04.70)
A former captain of the club, he has made the supporters believe that anything is possible – with the exception of winning La Liga.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Dani ARANZUBIA
Age 33 (18.09.79)
Capped once by Spain and signed from Deportivo La Coruna in August. Scored with a header for Depor, against Almeria in 2011.

Thibaut COURTOIS (Bel)
Age 21 (11.05.92)
Managed to convince Chelsea to let him stay on loan for a third season. Both of his parents were professional volleyball players.

PLUS: (45) **David GIL** (11.01.94)

DEFENDERS

Toby ALDERWEIRELD (Bel)
Age 24 (02.03.89)
Central defender signed from Ajax in September for €7m.

Diego GODIN (Uru)
Age 27 (16.02.86)
Tough centre-half who is prone to occasional lapses. Joined from Villarreal, where he fell out – on live television – with the club president.

Emilio INSUA (Arg)
Age 24 (07.01.89)
Full-back signed from Sporting Lisbon after playing for Liverpool and Galatasaray. Capped by Argentina but has a Spanish passport.

JUANFRAN
Age 28 (09.01.85)
Midfielder who was converted to right-back, where he won a call-up for Spain. Began his career at Real Madrid.

Filipe LUIS (Bra)
Age 28 (09.08.85)
Another who was at Real Madrid, where he failed to make the first team. An attacking threat on the left.

MIRANDA (Bra)
Age 29 (07.09.84)
Scored the winning goal in last season's Spanish Cup Final. A no-thrills central defender who is tough, clever and strong in the air.

PLUS: (18) **Jose GIMENEZ** (Uru, Age 18, 20.01.95), (17) **Javi MANQUILLO** (Age 19, 05.05.94)

MIDFIELDERS

ARDA Turan (Tur)
Age 26 (30.01.87)
The side's creative force, he had his head shaved at the Bernabeu last term after promising to do so if Atletico won the Spanish Cup.

GABI
Age 30 (10.07.83)
Club captain who is swift in the tackle, tidy in possession and good from set-pieces. Re-joined Atletico after a spell at Real Zaragoza.

Raul GARCIA
Age 27 (11.07.86)
Back at the club after a season on loan at Osasuna. Strong in the air and a clever finisher.

KOKE
Age 21 (08.01.92)
Made his Spain debut against Ecuador in August, which was recognition for his ability to make better players of those around him.

Cristian RODRIGUEZ (Uru)
Age 27 (30.09.85)
Always ready to come off the bench and make an impact. Turned down offers from elsewhere to leave in the summer.

Mario SUAREZ
Age 26 (24.02.87)
Central midfielder who came through the youth ranks but moved to Mallorca before rejoining the club. He speaks exceptional English.

PLUS: (15) **Josuha GUILAVOGUI** (Fra, Age 22, 19.09.90)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

TIAGO (Por)
Age 32 (02.05.81)
Has played less since Simeone's arrival but continues to be an important member of the squad.

Oliver TORRES
Age 18 (10.11.94)
At Atletico since the age of 13, he made his debut last season. Rumoured that Villa's signing gave Barca first option on the Spain Under-20 creator.

FORWARDS

ADRIAN
Age 25 (08.01.88)
Has a fine touch but lacks the aggression Simeone demands and has slipped out of the starting XI.

Leo BAPTISTAO (Bra)
Age 20 (26.08.92)
Played for the same Brazilian boys' side as Neymar. Moved to Spain at 16 and joined Atletico from Rayo Vallecano in June for €6m.

Diego COSTA (Bra)
Age 24 (07.10.88)
Feisty, relentless, sneaky and talented. His superb form in the second half of last season was one of the reasons the club did not panic about Falcao going.

David VILLA
Age 31 (03.12.81)
Spain's all-time top scorer, he was signed from Barcelona for €21m, rising to a possible €5m if he stays for three years. His father, Mel, was a miner.

ANALYSIS

Cup success over rivals has brought real belief

Last season, at last, the long wait was finally over and all the pessimism was blown away. After 14 years and 25 games of trying, Atletico Madrid beat their city rivals, Real Madrid.

That they did it in the Final of the Spanish Cup – and at the Santiago Bernabeu too – only made it better.

That victory in May was the culmination of a brilliant couple of years for Atletico. Since Simeone took over as coach in December 2011, they have won the Europa League, the UEFA Super Cup and the Spanish Cup. Beating Madrid was symbolic of a new mentality about the club, which has been instilled into the side by Simeone.

Star turn...Villa takes on the Real Sociedad defence in an early-season La Liga game

Today's Atletico are a tough, well-organised and tactically astute side. Above all, they are fiercely competitive. Even the departure of top scorer Radamel Falcao in the summer has not wiped out the optimism.

Atletico had already lined up the signing of Baptistao, while Costa renewed his contract and they took Villa from Barcelona. Although there are doubts about the depth of their squad, the starting line-up looks strong – and there has been stability, too. Villa for Falcao was the only difference between the Atletico side that won last year's Cup Final and the one that started this season's Super Cup first leg against Barcelona.

Sid Lowe

4-4-2

STADIUM

ESTADIO VICENTE CALDERON (54,960)
Few stadiums can match the sensation and sheer noise of the Calderon when getting behind Atleti. Originally known as Estadio Manzanares when opened in 1966, it later changed its name in honour of an ex-club president.

AUSTRIA VIENNA

Austrian champions, they beat FH and Dinamo Zagreb to reach the group stage
Best performance: reached the semi-finals in 1979

AUSTRIA — GROUP G

COACH

Nenad BJELICA (Cro)
Age 42 (20.08.71)
Replaced Peter Stöger in the summer having led Wolfsberger out of the second tier and to fifth place on their top-flight debut last term.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

1 **Pascal GRUNWALD**
Age 30 (13.11.82)
Second choice who was limited to one appearance last season. Troubled by injury since joining in 2011.

13 **Heinz LINDNER**
Age 23. (17.07.90)
First choice since the 2010-11 season. He was voted the Austrian league's best keeper last term.

PLUS: (26) **Ivan KARDUM** (Cro), Age 26, 18.07.87)

DEFENDERS

27 **Emir DILAVER**
Age 22 (07.05.91)
Of Bosnian descent and can play right-back or in midfield and has been capped by Austria's under-21 team.

30 **Fabian KOCH**
Age 24 (24.06.89)
Right-back signed in 2011, he was sent to the reserves in the 2011-12 season but was back in the squad last term.

22 **Marin LEOVAC**
Age 25 (07.08.88)
Bosnian-born, he made his debut in 2009. Also holds Austrian citizenship.

14 **Manuel ORTLECHNER**
Age 33 (14.03.80)
The captain had something of a journeyman career, with SV Ried, Austria Kärnten and Pasching before arriving in 2009.

4 **Kaja ROGULJ (Cro)**
Age 27 (15.06.86)
Centre-back who has been at the club since 2011. Previously played for Slaven Belupo in his homeland and Bosnia's Posušje.

5 **Lukas ROTPULLER**
Age 22 (31.03.91)
Back-up to Roguljj, he made nine appearances in last season's title-winning campaign. An under-20 international.

PLUS: (47) **Eric PLATTENSTEINER** (Age 21, 22.12.91), (15) **Christian RAMSEBNER** (Age 24, 26.03.89), (44) **Marco STARK** (Age 20, 05.01.93)

DEFENDERS (cont)

29 **Markus SUTTNER**
Age 26 (16.04.87)
The club's regular left-back for the last four seasons. Won his first cap last year.

MIDFIELDERS

20 **Alexander GORGON**
Age 24 (28.10.88)
Homegrown right-sided midfielder and the son of former Polish player and referee Wojciech Gorgon.

10 **Alexander GRUNWALD**
Age 24 (01.05.89)
Moved to Wiener Neustadt for three seasons before returning in 2011. Spent last term in a central role.

25 **James HOLLAND (Aus)**
Age 24 (15.05.89)
Joined in January 2012 after two frustrating years at AZ, where he did not make a single appearance.

17 **Florian MADER**
Age 31 (14.09.82)
Spent his early days between the top flight and second division. Moved to Austria Vienna two seasons ago.

18 **Thomas MURG**
Age 18 (14.11.94)
Made his debut for Grazer in the third tier as a 15-year-old in 2010. After helping them to the play-offs in 2012 he joined Austria Vienna.

PLUS: (8) **Tomas SIMKOVIC** (Age 26, 16.04.87), (7) **Dare VRSIC** (Sln, Age 28, 26.09.84)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

28 **Daniel ROYER**
Age 23 (22.05.90)
Returned this term after two seasons in Germany, one with Hanover in the Bundesliga and one with Cologne in the second tier.

FORWARDS

16 **Philipp HOSINER**
Age 24 (15.05.89)
Last season, his first with the club, he was the league's top scorer last term with 32 goals. Scored his first goals for his country in March.

11 **Tomas JUN (CzR)**
Age 30 (17.01.83)
Much-travelled, he arrived at Austria in 2010 via Sparta Prague, Jablonec, Trabzonspor, Besiktas and Teplice.

24 **Roman KIENAST**
Age 29 (29.03.84)
Scored the goal against Dinamo Zagreb to secure Champions League football a minute after coming off the bench in the play-off second leg.

9 **Rubin OKOTIE**
Age 26 (06.06.87)
Signed from Sturm Graz. Born in Karachi of a Nigerian father and Austrian mother. Spent two seasons at Nuremberg and has played for Austria at various youth levels.

19 **Marko STANKOVIC**
Age 27 (17.02.86)
Has performed consistently well in his three seasons since joining from Serie B club Triestina. Former Austria youth international.

PLUS: (23) **Srdan SPIRIDONOVIC** (Age 23, 13.10.93), (35) **Nikola ZIVOTIC** (Age 17, 26.01.96)

ANALYSIS

Austria relying on home-based options

Austrian football has fallen on hard times over the last few years and *Die Veilchen* (the violets) – whose total of 24 league titles is bettered only by neighbours Rapid – have not escaped the recent troubles.

The first team from the country to reach the group stage of the Champions League for eight years, they have invested a mere £160,000 on a squad which includes very few foreign players. Even compared to the likes of Anderlecht, Steaua Bucharest and Basle, their budget is a drop in the ocean.

After winning the Austrian title in 2005-06 with a squad featuring a dazzling array of Brazilians, east Europeans and Scandinavians, the club's billionaire backer, Franck Stronach, quit the club, forcing a sharp reduction in budget and leaving no option but to invest in developing their own players.

It has not been easy but, at least at domestic level, Austria Vienna have recovered and last year won the league for the first time in seven seasons, outperforming even Salzburg with their far greater resources.

Many fans will sympathise with the club's home-based policy and modest spending, and it will be interesting to see if they spend wisely after a sudden Champions League cash injection. Sadly, qualification for the last 16 is highly unlikely.

Brian Homewood

Acknowledgement...thanking the fans after confirming their place in the group stage

4-3-3

STADIUM

ERNST HAPPEL STADION (53,000)
The club's own Franz Horr Stadium, now known as the Generali Arena for sponsorship reasons, has a capacity of just 13,500, so they will play their group games at the much larger Ernst Happel.

BARCELONA

Qualified directly for group stage as La Liga champions
Winners four times (1992, 2006, 2009 and 2011)

SPAIN — GROUP H

COACH

Gerardo MARTINO (Arg)
Age 50 (20.11.62)
A disciple of Marcelo Bielsa and dad of Messi's dad. Formerly with Newell's Old Boys, who he led to the 2013 Torneo Final title.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

13 **Jose Manuel PINTO**
Age 37 (08.11.75)
Back-up keeper and hip hop enthusiast who has a musical production company in the south of Spain.

1 **Victor VALDES**
Age 31 (14.01.82)
In his last season at the club, he will leave as the most successful keeper in Barca's history.

PLUS: (25) **Oier OLAZABAL** (Age 24, 14.09.89)

DEFENDERS

21 **ADRIANO (Bra)**
Age 28 (26.10.84)
Can fill in all over the pitch and started at centre-back against Real Madrid last season. Quick, and reliable but injury prone.

18 **Jordi ALBA**
Age 24 (21.03.89)
Began his career at Barcelona but didn't make the first team until brought back from Valencia. Skilful winger turned into an attacking full-back.

22 **Dani ALVES (Bra)**
Age 30 (06.05.83)
May not be the force he once was but still a key figure in Barca's counter-attacks. Question marks still linger about his defensive qualities.

14 **Javier MASCHERANO (Arg)**
Age 29 (08.06.84)
Midfielder who has been converted into a centre-back but lacks ability in the air. Has a sharp tactical mind.

3 **Gerard PIQUE**
Age 26 (02.02.87)
A vital component of the Barca defence, it is fundamental that he stays fit in the absence of strength in depth at the back.

5 **Carles PUYOL**
Age 35 (13.04.78)
Still hugely important but injuries are ever more frequent. Called the summer's best "signing" by a Catalan newspaper on his latest return.

PLUS: (15) **Marc BARTRA** (Age 22, 15.01.91), (2) **Martin MONTOYA** (Age 22, 14.04.91)

MIDFIELDERS

19 **Ibrahim AFELLAY (Hol)**
Age 27 (02.04.86)
Will miss the first four months of the season after undergoing surgery on his right leg. Spent last season on loan at Schalke.

16 **Sergio BUSQUETS**
Age 25 (16.07.88)
The unsung hero for a long time, but now lauded for his tidy work in possession. Does tend to go down easily though.

4 **Cesc FABREGAS**
Age 26 (04.05.87)
Barca rejected an offer of €30m for the former Arsenal captain in pre-season saying he was "completely non-transferable"

8 **Andres INIESTA**
Age 29 (11.05.84)
Has added a real sense of leadership and responsibility on the pitch over the last season or so to go with his sublime skills.

17 **Alex SONG (Cam)**
Age 26 (09.09.87)
Barca have rejected the idea of turning him into a centre-back. Now back-up for Busquets.

6 **XAVI**
Age 33 (25.01.80)
Barca's metronome for so long, there has been a sense over the last six months that the post-Xavi era may be upon us.

PLUS: (12) **Jonathan DOS SANTOS** (Mex, Age 23, 26.04.90), (24) **Sergi ROBERTO** (Age 21, 07.02.92)

FORWARDS

23 **Isaac CUENCA**
Age 22 (27.04.91)
Spent the second half of last season on loan to Ajax, but suffered a knee injury that kept him out for four months.

10 **Lionel MESSI (Arg)**
Age 26 (24.06.87)
The best player in the world, but went into this season with some nagging doubts about his fitness.

11 **NEYMAR (Bra)**
Age 21 (05.02.92)
A €57m summer signing from Santos, it will be fascinating to see if his ego gets in the way of his partnership with Messi.

7 **PEDRO**
Age 26 (28.07.87)
Possesses pace, determination and a knack of scoring in big games. His dad works on a petrol station forecourt.

9 **Alexis SANCHEZ (Chl)**
Age 24 (19.12.88)
After finishing last season looking fit and sharp, the early signs are that he will have a key role to play this time round.

20 **Cristian TELLO**
Age 22 (11.08.91)
Joined the club aged 11 and is lightning quick. Was a Euro Under-21 winner this summer and made his senior debut against Ecuador in pre-season.

ANALYSIS

Nothing less than victory in May will suffice

Despite winning the league last season with 100 points – the joint-highest total in history – the season still left Barcelona with mixed emotions. The real measure of Spain's big two is Europe and it was there that Barca were found wanting.

While reaching a sixth successive semi-final was a unique achievement in the European Cup, the 7-0 aggregate loss to Bayern Munich was humbling. It also revealed some of Barcelona's flaws: their defensive vulnerability, a lack of intensity and an over-reliance on Messi.

Some of those problems should come as no surprise, after all Barca were effectively playing without a coach at the end of last season as Tito Vilanova was in New York receiving treatment for cancer.

There have been early signs this season of an improvement in the side. Neymar gives a far greater variety of options up front, while new coach Martino has re-imposed the high-pressure game that used to characterise previous Barca sides.

The club failed to sign a new centre-back, although Martino appears to be happy with the resources available to him.

"Why would I change anything?" asks the Argentinian. "I loved Barcelona's style. All we have done is recuperate things that they had forgotten."

Sid Lowe

Off the mark...Neymar celebrates his first goal for Barcelona, against Atletico Madrid

4-3-3

STADIUM

CAMP NOU (96,336)
Barcelona's home since 1957, it seats 99,786 – which is reduced for European games – making it the largest stadium in Europe and the third biggest in the world. It hosted the 1989 European Cup Final and the 1999 Champions League Final.

BASLE

Swiss champions, they qualified by beating Maccabi Tel Aviv and Ludogorets
Best performance: reached the quarter-finals in 1974

SWITZERLAND — GROUP E

COACH

Murat YAKIN
Age 39 (15.09.74)
Central defender who won three league titles with Basle and 49 Swiss caps. Returned to the club as coach midway through last season.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Yann SOMMER
Age 24 (17.12.88)
Joined aged 15 and became first choice at the start of the 2011-12 season. Ever-present in the title-winning league campaign last term.

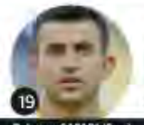
Germano VAILATI
Age 33 (30.08.80)
At his seventh Swiss club but does not get much of a look-in.

DEFENDERS

Arlind AJETI
Age 19 (25.09.93)
Had four games last season and has been playing regularly this term. A Switzerland youth international.

Philipp DEGEN
Age 30 (15.02.83)
A full-back or midfielder, he left the club in 2005 for spells at Borussia Dortmund and Liverpool before returning in 2011.

Ivan IVANOV (Bul)
Age 25 (25.02.88)
Central defender who has played for CSKA Sofia, Alania Vladikavkaz and Partizan Belgrade.



Behrang SAFARI (Swe)
Age 28 (09.02.85)
Iran-born left-back whose family moved to Sweden when he was two. Signed in 2008 and returned this season after a spell at Anderlecht.

Gaston SAURO (Arg)
Age 23 (23.02.90)
Central defender signed from Boca Juniors a year ago, having played only a handful of top-flight games.

Fabian SCHAR
Age 21 (20.12.91)
Joined from lower division Wil at the start of last season and quickly became a regular, also earning his first Switzerland cap.

MIDFIELDERS

Stephan ANDRIST
Age 25 (12.12.87)
Joined from Thun in 2011 but spent last season on loan at Lucerne, where he scored six goals in 25 games.

David DEGEN
Age 30 (15.02.83)
Philipp's twin plays wide on the right. Homegrown, but made his professional debut at Aarau, and has since returned three times to Basle.

Marcelo DIAZ (Chil)
Age 26 (30.12.86)
Has an astute eye for a pass. Previously at Universidad de Chile, he did not live up to expectations in his first season.

Mohamed ELNENY (Egy)
Age 21 (11.07.92)
Like fellow Egyptian Salah, a gifted player with considerable potential who adds a touch of class. Signed at the start of 2012.

Fabian FREI
Age 24 (08.01.89)
Attack-minded star who took part in the Champions League campaign two seasons ago, scoring in the 3-3 draw at Manchester United.

Kay VOSER
Age 26 (04.01.87)
Joined in 2011 but his first season was curtailed by injury. Made 13 league appearances last term.

PLUS: (8) **Serey DIE** (IvC, Age 28, 07.11.84)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

Taulant XHAKA
Age 22 (28.03.91)
Kosovo-born player whose brother Granit also started out at Basle and is now at Borussia Monchengladbach.

FORWARDS

Matias DELGADO (Arg)
Age 30 (15.12.82)
Scored 41 goals in three seasons during a previous stint at the club between 2003 and 2006, winning two league titles. Has returned via Besiktas and Al Jazira.

Mohamed SALAH (Egy)
Age 21 (15.06.92)
Quick, tricky and exciting winger who is likely to use Basle as a stepping stone to a bigger European club. Slightly let down by erratic finishing.

Giovanny SIO (IvC)
Age 24 (31.03.89)
Was quick off the mark with three goals in his first three games. A French youth cap before changing allegiance.

Valentin STOCKER
Age 24 (12.04.89)
Quick, left-sided international who is dangerous when shooting from distance. Signed in 2007 and has won five league titles at the club.

Marco STRELLER
Age 32 (18.06.81)
Lanky former international with surprisingly nimble footwork. Began his career at Basle and returned via Borussia Dortmund.

ANALYSIS

Carefree Swiss know their place

Basle, who are Switzerland's third most successful club overall, have dominated the domestic scene in the last few seasons, winning the Super League four times in a row. But, in European terms, their ambitions are far more limited, and they would be delighted to repeat their campaign of two seasons ago when they reached the last 16.

Financially sound and well-managed, Basle are well aware of their position in the scheme of things and have avoided the temptation to spend lavishly in the hope of European success.

Their squad is an interesting mix of young home-bred players, some returning veterans and a smattering of foreigners, including the exciting young Egyptian pair of Elneny and Salah.

Class act...Salah (right) takes on Ludogorets of Bulgaria in the play-off round

Coach Yakin likes to switch between a 4-1-4-1 and a 4-4-2 set-up, but whichever formation he uses Basle are an adventurous outfit – as their performances on the road showed in qualifying, with seven goals scored in two away games.

The arrival of experienced Ivorian striker Sio has given them an added edge in attack and central defender Schar is already showing huge promise.

Their supporters provide impressive vocal backing, both at home and away, belying the Swiss reputation for being quiet and reserved.

Brian Homewood

4-4-2

STADIUM

ST JAKOB-PARK (42,500)
Opened in 2001, with a shopping centre underneath, the arena is built on the site of the club's previous home ground and is now Switzerland's largest football venue. It is nicknamed "Joggeli" by the locals.

BAYER LEVERKUSEN

Qualified directly for group stage after finishing third in Bundesliga
Best performance: runners-up in 2002

GERMANY — GROUP A

COACH

Sami HYYPIA
Age 39 (07.10.73)
Won the Champions League in 2005 as a player with Liverpool. Took sole control of Leverkusen this summer.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Bernd LENO
Age 21 (04.03.92)
In his third season as a pro, he confidently expects to be in the World Cup squad, overlooking his below-par work at the Euro Under-21s.

Andres PALOP (Spa)
Age 39 (22.10.73)
Previously with Valencia, Villarreal and Sevilla, he joined Leverkusen in the summer as a back-up.

PLUS: (22) **David YELLDELL** (USA, Age 31, 01.10.81)

DEFENDERS

Sebastian BOENISCH (Pol)
Age 26 (01.02.87)
Combative left-back whose stock fell after a poor Euro 2012, but has fought back since joining Bayer in November from Werder Bremen.

Giulio DONATI (Ita)
Age 23 (05.02.90)
Italy under-21 right-back signed from Internazionale for €2.25m. Prefers guarding his flank to driving forward.

Roberto HILBERT
Age 28 (16.10.84)
Right-back who returned to Germany in July, on a free from Turkish side Besiktas, having won the Bundesliga with Stuttgart in 2007.

Emir SPAHIC (Bos)
Age 32 (18.08.80)
Uncompromising centre-back who joined from Sevilla in June after spells in Russia and France. Contrary to popular belief, he is not Edin Dzeko's cousin.

Kostas STAFYLIDIS (Gre)
Age 19 (02.12.93)
Tough-tackling left-back lured away from PAOK in the summer. Captained his country in the summer's Under-20 World Cup.

Ömer TOPRAK (Tur)
Age 24 (21.07.89)
The ever-improving central defender won the Euro Under-19s with Germany in 2008 but opted to play for Turkey at senior level.

PLUS: (30) **Malcom CACUTALUA** (Age 18, 15.11.94)

DEFENDERS (cont)

Philipp WOLLSCHEID
Age 24 (06.03.89)
Central defender who has been a revelation since quitting Nuremberg at the start of last season. Won his first cap in May, against Ecuador.

MIDFIELDERS

Lars BENDER
Age 24 (27.04.89)
Defensive midfielder with limitless stamina, superior tactical appreciation and utter consistency. His twin, Sven, plays for Borussia Dortmund.

Emre CAN
Age 19 (12.01.94)
Germany Under-21 signed from Bayern Munich on a four-year deal in August. Bayern have an option to buy him back.

Gonzalo CASTRO
Age 26 (11.06.87)
Most productive when pushing forward from the middle of the park, but can also deputise in either full-back slot.

Jens HEGELER
Age 25 (22.01.88)
Towering central midfielder or centre-back who joined Leverkusen in 2006. A product of Cologne's academy.

Stefan REINARTZ
Age 24 (01.01.89)
Uncomplicated and effective midfield holder. Called into the Germany squad this summer for the first time in three years.

PLUS (31) **Dominik KOHR** (Age 19, 31.01.94), (32) **Jonas MEFFERT** (Age 18, 04.09.94)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

Simon ROLFES
Age 31 (21.01.82)
In danger of losing his place a year ago, the club's captain is nothing if not a fighter and has once again proved himself indispensable.

FORWARDS

Eren DERDIYOK (Swi)
Age 25 (12.06.88)
Returned to Leverkusen on a season-long loan from Hoffenheim in August, having left for €5m last year.

Stefan KIESSLING
Age 29 (25.01.84)
Only the second player to score 100 Bundesliga goals for Leverkusen. Despite being top scorer in the Bundesliga last term he is often overlooked by the national side.

Robbie KRUSE (Aus)
Age 24 (05.10.88)
Relegated with Fortuna Dusseldorf last season, he needed little persuasion to join Leverkusen. Was something of a handful in his career with Brisbane Roar.

Sidney SAM
Age 25 (31.01.88)
Hampered by injuries for two years, the winger has plenty to offer if he manages to stay fit, notably his pace. Could be an outside bet for Germany's World Cup squad.

SON Heung-min (SKo)
Age 21 (08.07.92)
Leverkusen's most expensive signing ever, his outstanding form for Hamburg last term earned him a €10m switch and his brief is to replace new Chelsea signing Andre Schurrle.

ANALYSIS

Shallow squad must overcome past scars

Runners-up back in 2002 – when they lost 2-1 to Real Madrid in Glasgow – the Rhinelanders will have two basic aims in this season's competition: to progress to the knockout phase and to avoid any humiliations.

Several of the current squad had the dubious experience of being on the wrong end of a 7-1 defeat away to Barcelona in 2012 and the scars of that night in the Camp Nou have still yet to properly heal.

With two of their most prominent players, forward Andre Schurrle and rampaging right-back Daniel Carvajal having left for Chelsea and Real Madrid respectively, Leverkusen have undoubtedly lost a great deal of class. They were, however, delighted to tie prolific marksman Kiessling to a new two-year deal in July.

Staying..Kiessling (left) signed a new contract with Leverkusen during the summer

In goalkeeper Leno, their two central defenders, the three-man midfield bloc and ace striker Kiessling, they still have an exceptional spine. And provided that injuries do not eat away at what is something of a shallow squad they could spring a surprise or two.

The 4-3-3 system preferred by Hyypia fits the individuals at his disposal like a glove. It puts the emphasis on a compact back-line and lightning-fast counter-attacks, with frequent positional interchanging in midfield and up front.

Nick Blowell

4-3-3

STADIUM

BAYARENA (30,210)
Renamed in 1998, the original Ulrich-Haberland-Stadion was opened 40 years earlier. The often considered plan to increase the stadium's capacity to 40,000 – and therefore make it into a UEFA five-star arena – has yet to win concrete approval.

BAYERN MUNICH

Qualified directly into group stage as holders
Winners five times (1974, 1975, 1976, 2001 and 2013)

GERMANY — GROUP D

COACH

Pep GUARDIOLA (Spa)
Age 42 (18.01.71)
Back in the game after a year's rest, following four seasons in charge of Barcelona – during which he won two Champions Leagues.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

ANALYSIS

Guardiola does things his own way

Pep Guardiola is never one for soft options or the betrayal of principles. Rather than copy the winning formula of his predecessor, Jupp Heynckes, he is going his own way at Bayern.

While the club's director of sport, Matthias Sammer, has spoken of the transition from Heynckes to Guardiola resulting only in "changes in detail", the truth has proved more wide-reaching, with the new man instigating revolution on so many levels. Rather than Heynckes' cherished 4-2-3-1 formation, Guardiola has gone with a fluid 4-1-4-1/4-3-3. Bayern's pressing game is even more intense and precisely co-ordinated than before, while the defending of corners is based on zonal rather than man-for-man marking.

Familiar sight...(from left) Ribery, Robben, Muller and Mandzukic celebrate a Bayern goal

There have also been plenty of positional experiments, notably with full-back Lahm in midfield, wide-man Ribery as a false nine, Muller in the lone striking role and Martinez swapping defensive midfield for centre-back.

Strengthened by the arrival of Gotze and Alcantara, Bayern have a realistic chance of making history by becoming the first team to successfully defend the Champions League title. But it might boil down to Guardiola's ability to keep his star ensemble happy. Competition for places has never been as intense – and if the house becomes divided, the consequences could be terrible.

Nick Bowen

GOALKEEPERS

1 **Manuel NEUER**
Age 27 (27.03.86)
Germany's No1 for the past three years, he has become even more assured and physically imposing since leaving Schalke for €22m in 2011.

22 **Tom STARKE**
Age 32 (18.03.81)
Giant back-up who joined Bayern a year ago. Inadvertently punched new coach Guardiola during a pre-season photo shoot.

PLUS: (32) **Lukas RAEDER** (Age 19, 30.12.93)

DEFENDERS

27 **David ALABA (Aut)**
Age 21 (24.06.92)
The first Austrian to win the Champions League, the left-back was born in Vienna to a Filipino mother and Nigerian DJ father.

17 **Jerome BOATENG**
Age 25 (03.08.88)
An athletic stopper or right-back. He lost his Champions League medal during the celebrations in May, but a journalist found it for him.

4 **DANTE (Bra)**
Age 29 (18.10.83)
Despite a genial personality, the central defender is as tough as they come. Recently had a hit song in the German pop charts.

15 **Jan KIRCHHOFF**
Age 22 (01.10.90)
Promising centre-back signed this summer from Mainz. Fit again after having surgery on a groin injury towards the end of last season.

21 **Philipp LAHM**
Age 29 (11.11.83)
Local lad made good who is an intelligent captain. A class act in either full-back positions, though Guardiola may push him into midfield.

5 **Daniel VAN BUYTEN (Bel)**
Age 35 (07.02.78)
Rugged centre-back whose father was a wrestler. With Bayern for seven years, this is possibly his last season as a professional.

PLUS: (26) **Diego CONTENTO** (Age 23, 01.05.90), (13) **RAFINHA** (Bra, Age 28, 07.09.85), (35) **Benno SCHMITZ** (Age 18, 17.11.94)

MIDFIELDERS

6 **Thiago ALCANTARA (Spa)**
Age 22 (11.04.91)
Voted the best player at this summer's Euro Under-21s. Signed from Barcelona in July for €25m, his agent is Guardiola's brother, Pere.

39 **Toni KROOS**
Age 23 (04.01.90)
Was in great form last term but missed the end of the season with a groin problem. His younger brother, Felix, plays for Werder Bremen.

8 **Javi MARTINEZ (Spa)**
Age 25 (02.09.88)
A midfield holder, he can also be used in central defence. Even played up front for Spain at the Confederations Cup in the summer.

7 **Franck RIBERY (Fra)**
Age 30 (07.04.83)
Europe's player of the year last season, the wide man combines impish skills with incisiveness and a great deal of unselfishness.

31 **Bastian SCHWEINSTEIGER**
Age 29 (01.08.84)
A mainstay of the side for over a decade, the engine-room regulator was voted Germany's player of the year in July.

23 **Mitchell WEISER**
Age 19 (21.04.94)
Confident, right-sided midfielder now back after a loan spell with Kaiserslautern. Learnt his trade at Cologne, where his father Patrick used to play.

PLUS: (37) **Julian GREEN** (Age 18, 06.06.95), (34) **Pierre HOJBJERG** (Den, Age 18, 05.08.95), (36) **Alessandro SCHOPF** (Age 19, 07.02.94)

FORWARDS

19 **Mario GOTZE**
Age 21 (03.06.92)
Signed for a German record €37m from Borussia Dortmund in the summer. Bright and technically gifted, he is every inch a Guardiola player.

9 **Mario MANDZUKIC (Cro)**
Age 27 (21.05.86)
Took no time at all to settle in the wake of a 2012 move from Wolfsburg, proving himself good enough to push the prolific Mario Gomez onto the sidelines.

25 **Thomas MULLER**
Age 24 (13.09.89)
Exceptional in any role in and around the front line, he stands out with his off-the-ball running, dynamism, eye for goal and will to win. A native Bavarian.

14 **Claudio PIZARRO (Per)**
Age 34 (03.10.78)
Has scored regularly in spells with Werder Bremen and Bayern, and was ninth in the all-time list of Bundesliga scorers with 166 goals at the start of this season.

10 **Arjen ROBBEN (Hol)**
Age 29 (23.01.84)
Previously considered by many to be too individualistic, the winger went a long way to rehabilitation with the winner in this year's Champions League Final.

11 **Xherdan SHAQIRI (Swi)**
Age 21 (10.10.91)
Now in his second season, the winger or playmaker faces the make-or-break challenge of forcing himself up the pecking order.

PLUS: (20) **Patrick WEIHRAUCH** (Age 19, 03.03.94)

4-1-4-1

STADIUM

ALLIANZ ARENA (68,000)
Germany's third-biggest stadium (behind Dortmund's Signal Iduna Park and the Olympiastadion in Berlin), Bayern moved here from Munich's Olympiastadion in 2005. Second-tier German side Munich 1860 also play home games at the stadium.

BENFICA

Qualified directly for group stage as Portuguese league runners-up
Winners twice (1961 and 1962)

PORTUGAL — GROUP C

COACH

Jorge JESUS
Age 59 (24.07.54)
An intense and committed leader who has renewed his contract and is by far the highest-paid coach in Portugal.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

ANALYSIS

Time to forget last season's dramatic finale

After a disastrous finale to last season – in which Benfica lost the league title, the Europa League Final and the Portuguese Cup Final in the space of 10 days – many changes were expected at the Stadium of Light this summer. But coach Jesus went into this campaign with largely the same group of players – including Cardozo, who clashed with his boss and pushed him in the chest after the domestic cup defeat.

Even though they reached their first European Final for 23 years in the Europa League, the Lisbon giants need to make an impact in the continent's premier competition. But that is easier said than done, of course, especially as Jesus' side got their current campaign off to an extremely mediocre start.

New addition...big-money signing Markovic has made an impressive start at his new club

Yet the fact that the spine of the current team was maintained gives supporters some reason for hope in the Champions League. Garay and Matic were both linked with a variety of clubs, but they have remained in Lisbon for at least a few more months. Both are expected to excel once more in a 4-3-3 formation.

There are also high expectations for Serbia international Markovic, who has taken his new club by storm with a series of inspirational displays. Such has been his impact that some are already comparing him with former greats Rui Costa and Karel Poborsky.

Pedro Pinto

GOALKEEPERS

1 **ARTUR (Bra)**
Age 32 (25.01.81)
After a stellar debut season two years ago, he made some mistakes in important games last year.

13 **Paulo LOPES**
Age 35 (29.06.78)
Well-travelled veteran who returned to Benfica last season.

PLUS: (41) **Jan OBLAK** (Slo, Age 20, 07.01.93)

DEFENDERS

24 **Ezequiel GARAY (Arg)**
Age 26 (10.10.86)
Highly rated, the international has rarely put a foot wrong since arriving from Real Madrid a year ago.

33 **JARDEL (Bra)**
Age 27 (29.03.86)
Tough centre-back who deputises well for Luisao and Garay.

4 **LUISAO (Bra)**
Age 32 (13.02.81)
The captain has been with the club since 2001. He is known as "the giraffe" due to his tall, lanky frame.

14 **Maxi PEREIRA (Uru)**
Age 29 (08.06.84)
Known for his determination and toughness and has been a fans' favourite ever since he joined in 2007. Has recently struggled for form but is still first choice.

28 **SILVIO**
Age 25 (28.09.87)
Signed from Atletico Madrid this summer, he can play full-back on either flank. Solid in defence and a good crosser of the ball.

16 **Guilherme SIQUEIRA (Bra)**
Age 27 (28.04.86)
A last-minute loan signing from Granada. Real Madrid wanted him but couldn't promise regular first-team football.

PLUS: (34) **Andre ALMEIDA** (Age 23, 10.09.90), (3) **Steven VITORIA** (Age 26, 07.01.93)

MIDFIELDERS

6 **Ruben AMORIM**
Age 28 (27.01.85)
Prefers the centre of midfield but can also play as a right-back. Portugal international but struggles to get playing time with Benfica.

10 **Filip DJURICIC (Ser)**
Age 21 (30.01.92)
Voted the third best player in the Dutch league last season with Heerenveen.

20 **Nico GAITAN (Arg)**
Age 25 (23.02.88)
Once linked with Manchester United, the playmaker has failed to hit such heights recently. Has plenty of creativity but lacks consistency.

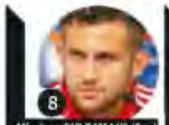
30 **Andre GOMES**
Age 20 (30.07.93)
One of the few to have graduated from the club's academy to the first team. Needs to develop as a player and a person.

21 **Nemanja MATIC (Ser)**
Age 25 (01.08.88)
A fine defensive midfielder who sits in front of the back four, dictating the game.

35 **Enzo PEREZ (Arg)**
Age 27 (22.02.86)
Joined last season as a winger, but now in central midfield. Works hard but is often criticised by the fans.

PLUS: (5) **Ljubomir FEJSA** (Ser, Age 25, 14.08.88)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)



8 **Miralem SULEJMANI (Ser)**
Age 24 (05.12.88)
Broke the Dutch transfer record when he joined Ajax for over €16m, but he has not lived up to his price tag. A fresh start at Benfica could reignite his career.

FORWARDS

7 **Oscar CARDOZO (Par)**
Age 30 (20.05.83)
The club's top scorer for the last seven seasons but a fall-out with the coach could see his playing time reduced.

15 **Ola JOHN (Hol)**
Age 21 (19.05.92)
Liberian-born winger who had a loan move to Ajax blocked by Benfica prior to the close of the transfer window.

11 **LIMA (Bra)**
Age 30 (11.08.83)
A late bloomer who only reached his potential two years ago with Braga, where he was joint top-scorer in the league. Scored 30 goals last season.

50 **Lazar MARKOVIC (Ser)**
Age 19 (02.03.94)
Cost €10m in the summer from Partizan Belgrade and made an immediate impact with a fine goal against rivals Sporting Lisbon.

19 **RODRIGO (Spa)**
Age 22 (06.03.91)
Has had an incredible goalscoring record for Spain's youth teams, but has failed to replicate that form with Benfica.

4-3-3

STADIUM

ESTADIO DA LUZ (65,000)
The new "Stadium of Light" is the largest arena in Portugal and will host the Final of this season's Champions League. Opened in October 2003 – to replace the old 120,000 capacity ground of the same name – it also staged the Euro 2004 Final.

BORUSSIA DORTMUND

Qualified directly for group stage as Bundesliga runners-up
Winners once (1997)

GERMANY — GROUP F

COACH

Jurgen KLOPP
Age 46 (16.06.67)
Self-confident enough to admit to a hair transplant, he has revelled in turning Dortmund into a stage for young talent.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

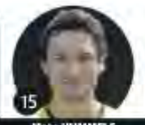
GOALKEEPERS

Mitchell LANGERAK (Aus)
Age 25 (22.08.88)
Capable understudy who joined a year after winning the 2009 A-League Grand Final with Melbourne Victory.

Roman WEIDENFELLER
Age 33 (06.08.80)
His consistency and flair for crucial saves at vital moments have been fundamental to the side's resurgence in the past three years.

PLUS: (33) **Zlatan ALOMEROVIC** (Age 22, 15.06.91)

DEFENDERS



Mats HUMMELS
Age 24 (16.12.88)
Technically refined, elegant and pacy centre-back who, according to statistics, commits less than one foul per game in the Bundesliga.

Oliver KIRCH
Age 31 (21.08.82)
Jumped at the chance last year to join Dortmund, the club he supported as a boy. Provides cover at full-back and in defensive midfield.

Sokratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (Gre)
Age 25 (09.06.88)
Signed from Werder Bremen for €8.5m in the summer. He can play right-back, central defence or in a midfield holding role. AEK Athens skipper at just 20.

Lukasz PISZCZEK (Pol)
Age 28 (03.06.85)
The right-back will be unavailable until 2014 after undergoing a hip operation. His attacking flair and wholehearted approach will be badly missed.

Marcel SCHMELZER
Age 25 (22.01.88)
Left-back who combines bite in the tackle with an excellent pressing game and attacking options.

Neven SUBOTIC (Ser)
Age 24 10.01.88)
Rangy centre-back who enjoys a fine understanding with Hummels at the heart of the defence. Brought up in the United States.

PLUS: (35) **Jannick BANDOWSKI** (Age 19, 30.03.94), (30) **Koray GUNTER** (Age 19, 16.08.94), (24) **Marian SARR** (Age 18, 30.01.95)

MIDFIELDERS

Sven BENDER
Age 24 (27.04.89)
Underrated defensive midfielder renowned for his reliability and tactical awareness. No other Dortmund player covers more ground in a game.

Kevin GROSSKREUTZ
Age 25 (19.07.88)
In his element bursting forward on either flank, the local boy is expected to fill in for Piszczek at right-back.

Ilkay GUNDOGAN
Age 22 (24.10.90)
From Gelsenkirchen, the home of arch-rivals Schalke, the link-man's influence continues to grow and he is wanted in La Liga and the Premier League.

Jonas HOFMANN
Age 21 (14.07.92)
Promising right-sided midfielder who is starting to make a name for himself with his sense of adventure.

Sebastian KEHL
Age 33 (13.02.80)
Although not assured of one of the two holding midfield slots, he is still captain in recognition of his natural authority and 11 years of service.

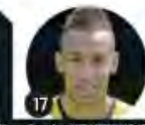
Henrikh MKHITARYAN (Arm)
Age 23 (21.10.89)
Goal-hungry and imaginative attacking midfielder from Shakhtar Donetsk who, at €26m, is Dortmund's record signing.

PLUS: (37) **Erik DURM** (Age 21, 12.05.92)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

Nuri SAHIN (Tur)
Age 25 (05.09.88)
After fruitless spells at Real Madrid and Liverpool, he is back where he began his career. A classy left-footer who controls the creative tempo.

FORWARDS



Pierre-Emerick AUBAMEYANG (Gab)
Age 24 (18.06.89)
French-born Gabon international who scored a hat-trick of penalties against Niger in June. Signed from Saint-Etienne for € 13m in July.

Jakub BLASZCZYKOWSKI (Pol)
Age 27 (14.12.85)
In his seventh season at Dortmund, the right-winger is full of pace, bullishness and the desire to make things happen.

Robert LEWANDOWSKI (Pol)
Age 25 (21.08.88)
Tried to join Bayern Munich this summer but was forced to remain in Dortmund. Tempted by a career in athletics during his youth.

Marco REUS
Age 24 (31.05.89)
His speed, technique and cleverly angled runs made him Germany's player of the year for 2012.

Julian SCHIEBER
Age 24 (13.02.89)
Physically imposing striker or left-sided attacking midfielder signed a year ago from Stuttgart. Owes his strength to wielding an axe at his parents' tree nursery.

PLUS: (34) **Marvin DUCKSCH** (Age 19, 07.03.94)

ANALYSIS

Beaten finalists rely on high-energy game again

Now that Dortmund have enjoyed a taste of the Champions League high life, fully deserving their runners-up medals in last season's competition, Jurgen Klopp's side will take some dislodging from the summit.

For all the pain triggered by the controversial sale of Mario Gotze to Bayern Munich – who beat them 2-1 in last season's Final at Wembley – the Ruhr club have wasted no time in plugging the hole. And thanks to the double-swoop for Armenian attacking midfielder Mkhitaryan and turbo-charged former Saint-Etienne front runner Aubameyang, Klopp arguably boasts even more options and flexibility in the attacking third.

Going nowhere...how will Lewandowski (left) react now that he has been forced to stay?

Whether using his preferred 4-2-3-1 template or the 4-3-3 that Klopp worked on extensively in pre-season, Dortmund's recipe for success will continue to be based on speed, energy and fluidity. Their high-intensity pressing game involves looking for an ultra-quick transition from reverse into top gear, in order to run the opposition off their feet with a devastating counter-attack.

There does, however, remain some concern over the club's strength in depth – and a lack of cover at full-back in particular. Much will also depend on the attitude of Lewandowski, whose hopes of a summer switch to Bayern were stubbornly resisted by the management.

Nick Bowell

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

SIGNAL IDUNA PARK (65,614)
Known pre-sponsorship as the Westfalenstadion, the ground can accommodate over 80,000 for Bundesliga games when there are no restrictions on standing. Its Suedtribune is the largest terrace for standing fans in Europe and has a capacity of 24,454.

CELTIC

Qualified with wins over Cliftonville, Elfsborg and Shakhter Karagandy
Winners once (1967)

SCOTLAND — GROUP H

COACH

Neil LENNON (NI)
Age 42 (25.06.71)
Took charge three years ago and earned European kudos last term with victories over Spartak Moscow and Barcelona.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Fraser FORSTER (Eng)
Age 25 (17.03.88)
Assured Champions League displays last season earned him a place in the England squad. Was the subject of strong interest from Benfica in the summer.

Lukasz ZALUSKA (Pol)
Age 31 (16.06.82)
Signed from Dundee United but demoted to understudy role since Forster's arrival last year. Strong shot-stopper, quick off his line, but prone to handling errors.

DEFENDERS

Efe AMBROSE (Nga)
Age 24 (18.10.88)
Centre-back who can also operate in the holding role. African Nations Cup winner, but errors cost Celtic against Juventus in Champions League.

Emilio IZAGUIRRE (Hon)
Age 27 (10.05.86)
Dynamic full-back whose barnstorming runs made him a crowd favourite and he swept the individual player awards after his first season in 2011.

Mikael LUSTIG (Swe)
Age 26 (13.12.86)
Attack-minded right-back, often deployed in the centre. Scored first goal of Champions League campaign in win over Cliftonville.

Adam MATTHEWS (Wal)
Age 21 (13.01.92)
Signed in 2011 as one for the future, at 19 he leap-frogged Cha Du-ri and Mark Wilson to make the right-back position his own, though he can also fill in at left-back when needed.

Charlie MULGREW
Age 27 (06.03.86)
Glaswegian-born centre-back, also happy at left-back. Contributes plenty of assists thanks to his crossing ability and scores regularly from free-kicks.

Virgil VAN DIJK (Hol)
Age 22 (08.07.91)
Centre-back signed from Groningen this summer. Rated by Feyenoord forward Graziano Pelle as the best defender he faced last season.

PLUS: (22) **Steven MOUYOKOLO** (Fra, Age 27, 24.01.87)

MIDFIELDERS

Nir BITON (Isr)
Age 21 (30.10.91)
The 6ft 5in defensive midfielder racked up 123 appearances for Ashdod before joining Celtic in the summer. Captains Israel's Under-21s.

Scott BROWN
Age 28 (25.06.85)
The captain has adopted a more defensive role recently, but still goes forward to score the occasional screamer.

Kris COMMONS
Age 30 (30.08.83)
Attacking midfielder who averages more than a goal every three games.

Beram KAYAL (Isr)
Age 25 (02.05.88)
Can play a holding role, box-to-box or higher up the pitch. Wherever he plays he gives added physical presence and bite.

Joe LEDLEY (Wal)
Age 26 (23.01.87)
International who is normally deployed on left of the midfield quartet, but who can also drop into the full-back slot.

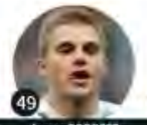
Tom ROGIC (Aus)
Age 20 (16.12.92)
Hugely promising attacking midfielder who won a worldwide competition to train at the Nike Academy, and has already been capped by his country.

PLUS: (58) **Filip TWARDZIK** (Cze, Age 20, 10.02.93), (46) **Dylan McGEOUCH** (Age 20, 15.01.93)

FORWARDS

Amido BALDE (Por)
Age 22 (16.05.91)
Lennon's first summer signing. A Sporting Lisbon academy graduate who helped Vitoria Guimaraes beat Benfica in the 2013 Portuguese Cup Final. Raw, but will add physical presence.

Derk BOERRIGTER (Hol)
Age 26 (16.10.86)
Left-footed winger recruited from group stage rivals Ajax, for whom he scored regularly in the last two title-winning campaigns. Powerful and direct.



James FORREST
Age 22 (07.07.91)
Skilful right-winger who graduated from the club's academy in 2010. Now a Scotland regular, he scored the stoppage-time winner against Shakhter Karagandy.

Teemu PUKKI (Fin)
Age 23 (29.03.90)
Versatile deadline-day recruit from Schalke who can operate as centre-forward, support striker or out wide.

Georgios SAMARAS (Gre)
Age 28 (21.02.85)
International whose lumbering style belies soft feet, an ability to link play and a knack for important goals. Scored in five consecutive away games in the Champions League last season.

Anthony STOKES (Ire)
Age 25 (25.07.88)
Arsenal academy graduate who racked up 51 goals in his first 110 appearances for Celtic. Immensely talented, but with a tendency to drift out of games.

ANALYSIS

Another big task for the Scottish champions

Forced to rebuild after the loss of his best midfielder, Victor Wanyama, and top scorer, Gary Hooper, to Premier League clubs, Neil Lennon signed five players in the summer. However, his likely starting XI retains a familiar look for the moment. And though thin on numbers, his squad boasts a number of players who can cover two positions.

In the play-off round, the Hoops transformed what was nearly their darkest hour in Europe into one of their most dramatic triumphs, as they overturned a 2-0 away-leg reverse against Kazakhstan champions Shakhter Karagandy, with a 3-0 home win, the final goal coming in stoppage time.

Done it...Forrest (centre) hails his late winner against Shakhter that put Celtic through

Their reward is a place in the "Group of Champions" with fellow former European Cup winners Milan, Ajax and Barcelona.

Celtic's 2-1 victory over Barca at Parkhead last term was used as evidence that they are out of the doldrums and they reached the knockout stage for the first time in five years.

That setback underlined the flaws in Celtic's 4-4-2 system and they are more likely to play a form of 4-4-1-1 with Commons in front of a fluid midfield linking up with Samaras. Displacing Barcelona or Milan from one of the top two positions looks a tough proposition. A drop to the Europa League may be the likeliest outcome.

Dan Brennan

4-4-1-1

STADIUM

CELTIC PARK (60,832)
Also known as Parkhead, it is the second biggest club stadium in the UK after Old Trafford, and the atmosphere makes it one of Europe's most intimidating venues. It will be used for the opening ceremony of the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

CHELSEA

Qualified directly for group stage by finishing third in the Premier League
Winners once (2012)

ENGLAND — GROUP E

COACH

José MOURINHO (Por)
Age 50 (26.01.63)
The 'Special One' is back, this time as the more relaxed 'Happy One', and pleased to have left the politics of the Bernabeu behind.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

1 Petr CECH (Cze)
Age 31 (20.05.82)
Now in his 10th year as no1 but could lose out next year if Thibaut Courtois is recalled from Atletico Madrid.

23 Mark SCHWARZER (Aus)
Age 40 (06.10.72)
Has played in Europa League Finals for both Middlesbrough and Fulham. Capped over 100 times by his country.

PLUS (46) **Jamal BLACKMAN** (Age 19, 27.10.93)

DEFENDERS

28 Cesar AZPILICUETA (Spa)
Age 24 (28.08.89)
Right-back signed from Marseille in summer 2012. Spain international but likely to be Chelsea's second choice behind Ivanovic.

24 Gary CAHILL
Age 27 (19.12.85)
Centre-back who has established himself as an England regular since joining from Bolton in 2012. Sent off in last year's Club World Cup Final.

3 Ashley COLE
Age 32 (20.12.80)
Left-back who won his 100th England cap earlier this year. Has played in three Champions League Finals and picked up a record seven FA Cup winner's medals.

2 Branislav IVANOVIC (Ser)
Age 29 (22.02.84)
Tough right-back who can also play in the centre. Missed the 2012 Champions League Final victory through suspension.

4 David LUIZ (Bra)
Age 26 (22.02.84)
Centre-back who is guilty of overplaying at times. Switched to a central midfield role by Brazil.

26 John TERRY
Age 32 (07.12.80)
Club captain. Missed a penalty in the 2008 Final in Moscow, suspended for the 2012 Final in Munich, and missed the 2013 Europa Final through injury.

PLUS (34) **Ryan BERTRAND** (Age 24, 05.08.89)

MIDFIELDERS

15 Kevin DE BRUYNE (Bel)
Age 22 (28.06.91)
Signed from Genk in 2012 but loaned out last season to Werder Bremen. His mother was born in west London.

17 Eden HAZARD (Bel)
Age 22 (07.01.91)
Quick-footed talent who operates on the left side of the attacking midfield trio. His brother, Thorgan, is on loan to Zulte Waregem.

8 Frank LAMPARD
Age 35 (20.06.78)
Tireless runner who became Chelsea's record goalscorer in May. Nephew of QPR manager Harry Redknapp. In his 13th season at Chelsea.

12 John Obi MIKEL (Nga)
Age 26 (22.04.87)
Defensive midfielder who has had an inconsistent time after Chelsea beat Manchester United to sign him as a teen.

11 OSCAR (Bra)
Age 22 (09.09.91)
Playmaker signed from Internacional for £25m in 2012. Mourinho's formation should provide the perfect platform for his talents.

7 RAMIRES (Bra)
Age 25 (24.03.87)
Brazil international who toils effectively in a deep midfield role. His Super Cup sending-off prompted Mourinho to complain about a UEFA "conspiracy".

PLUS (16) **Marco VAN GINKEL** (Hol, Age 20, 01.12.92)

FORWARDS

19 Demba BA (Sen)
Age 28 (25.05.85)
French-born Senegal international signed by Rafa Benitez last season. Almost joined Arsenal on a season's loan this summer only for Mourinho to block the deal.

29 Samuel ETO'O (Cam)
Age 32 (10.03.81)
Won the Champions League under Mourinho with Internazionale in 2010. Signed from Anzhi on a one-year deal in August.

10 Juan MATA (Spa)
Age 25 (23.04.88)
Eloquent and engaging World Cup winner and Euro 2012 champion, but not favoured by Mourinho, who demands his players track back.

14 Andre SCHURRLE (Ger)
Age 22 (06.11.90)
A new arrival this summer from Bayer Leverkusen. Runs an average 13km in every game. Can play wide or centrally.

9 Fernando TORRES (Spa)
Age 29 (20.03.84)
The great enigma. Has won every major trophy (World Cup, Euros, Champions League and Europa League) yet still seems lacking in confidence.

22 WILLIAN (Bra)
Age 25 (09.08.88)
Skilful playmaker who was on his way to Tottenham Hotspur until Chelsea hijacked the deal and signed him from Anzhi for £30m.

ANALYSIS

Mourinho's return prompts great expectations

Jose Mourinho is back in England and is already in trouble with UEFA, after accusing Europe's governing body of conspiring against his team following the Super Cup defeat to Bayern Munich in Prague.

Some things don't change, but Mourinho has returned to a club that is no longer the most powerful in the transfer market. Paris Saint-Germain, Monaco and Manchester City beat Chelsea to a number of potential targets.

Chelsea's business this summer was selective rather than transformative, with De Bruyne back after a loan spell in the Bundesliga, Schurrle a long-term target hired from Leverkusen, and Willian and Eto'o signed as opportunistic purchases from Anzhi's financial meltdown.

Place in Prague...new signing Schurrle played in the Super Cup defeat to Bayern

Chelsea have added some exciting attacking options to an experienced core of Cech, Terry and Lampard, but Mourinho's main problem will be keeping all the egos happy in a season that ends with the World Cup. Mata may be edged out by the more hard-working De Bruyne or Schurrle, while Torres may lose out to Eto'o in European games.

Eto'o was indulged by Anzhi and allowed to train at his own pace, so his fitness level may not be as high as Mourinho would like. But Chelsea, with a relatively easy group draw, will be expected to improve on last season's exit at the group stage.

Gavin Hamilton

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

STAMFORD BRIDGE (41,798)
The stadium has come a long way since the days of the Shed terrace and now boasts a hotel, conference centre and nightclub inside its redeveloped shell. But Chelsea are still keen to move to a new home, with a number of options being considered.

COPENHAGEN

Qualified directly for group stage as Danish Superliga champions
Best performance: reached the round of 16 in 2011

DENMARK — GROUP B

COACH

Stale SOLBAKKEN (Nor)
Age 45 (27.02.68)
Returned to the club in August after unhappy spells with Cologne and Wolves. Took the club to the knockout stage three seasons ago.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

1 Kim CHRISTENSEN
Age 34 (16.07.79)
Made headlines at his previous club, Gothenburg, where he once moved the posts closer to make his goal smaller.

21 Johan WILAND (Swe)
Age 32 (24.01.81)
Strong and agile, he has lots of European experience and a reputation for saving penalties. First choice for three seasons.

PLUS: (31) **Jakob BUSK** (Age 20, 12.09.93)

DEFENDERS

3 Pierre BENGTSSON (Swe)
Age 25 (12.04.88)
A fine passer of the ball who made the left-back spot his own after Bryan Oviedo moved to Everton.

2 Lars JACOBSEN
Age 33 (20.09.79)
Vastly experienced right-back and club captain who has had successful spells in the Bundesliga and Premier League.

5 Olof MELLBERG (Swe)
Age 36 (03.09.77)
Robust centre-half who has retired from international football with 117 caps. Has played for Aston Villa and Juventus.

25 Christoffer REMMER
Age 20 (16.01.93)
Moved up to the first-team squad last year and is seen as the long-term successor to Jacobsen at right-back.

17 Ragnar SIGURDSSON (Ice)
Age 27 (19.06.86)
Central defender now in his third season at the Parken. He is a goal threat at corners and free-kicks.

4 Kris STADSGAARD
Age 28 (01.08.85)
The son of former ref Knud Stadsgaard, he is a central defender who joined the club in January 2012 after seven years away from Denmark.

PLUS: (15) **Georg MARGREITTER** (Aut, Age 24, 07.11.88)

MIDFIELDERS

30 Christian BOLANOS (CR)
Age 29 (17.05.84)
Skilful and speedy winger who loves dribbling. He was a favourite of coach Solbakken last time round and is likely to be key this season.

6 CLAUDEMIR (Bra)
Age 25 (27.03.88)
Skilful yet hard-tackling, he has been the side's heartbeat since he was signed by Solbakken three seasons ago.

8 Thomas DELANEY
Age 22 (03.09.91)
Blessed with pace and an eye for a pass, the Denmark Under-21 is of Irish-American descent.

19 Rurik GISLASON (Ice)
Age 25 (23.02.88)
Attacking midfielder who left Iceland for Denmark as a teen. A broken hand may keep him out of the first two Champions League games.

16 Thomas KRISTENSEN
Age 30 (17.04.83)
Steady and secure, a long-serving central midfielder who has never been able to hold down a place in the national side or win a move abroad.

FORWARDS

12 Fanendo ADI (Nga)
Age 22 (10.10.90)
Had a superb goals record at Slovakian club Trencin and was on the radar of Ajax before Copenhagen signed him in July.

ANALYSIS

Solbakken must steady ship after rocky start

Denmark's perennial title winners enter this season's Champions League having suffered their worst crisis for years. They failed to win any of their opening five league games and dismissed coach Ariel Jacobs in a blind panic as a result.

It was a disastrous start that nobody saw coming, even though the club had been relatively inactive in the transfer market due to a period of financial consolidation, and new boss Solbakken will be expected to steady the ship. The Norwegian was previously in charge of the club from 2006 to 2011 and led Copenhagen to five Danish Superliga titles in that time.

Holding steady...Copenhagen (in white) on the defensive against Midtjylland this season

The loss of young international striker and last season's top scorer Andreas Cornelius, in a record move to Cardiff City, has hit the team much harder than had been anticipated. Adi arrived as a replacement and, after scoring within six minutes of his debut, he might be the catalyst the team needs to restore confidence and morale.

In Solbakken's early games he employed a 4-4-2 system and will probably adopt the same for Champions League matches, playing mostly on the counter-attack. The veterans Mellberg and Jacobsen have plenty of experience at this level, however it is safe to say that expectations are not high going into the competition.

Jim Holvey

4-4-2

FORWARDS (cont)

32 Danny AMANKWAA
Age 19 (30.01.94)
A powerhouse of a prospect with speed and dynamism. Most likely to be used as an impact sub.

18 Nicolai JORGENSEN
Age 22 (15.01.91)
A strong, tall front man with a powerful shot, he failed to breakthrough after a teenage transfer to Bayer Leverkusen. Joined Copenhagen in 2012.

23 Marvin POURIE (Ger)
Age 22 (08.01.91)
After a spell at the Liverpool academy, he went to Schalke and 1860 Munich before two seasons at Silkeborg earned a move to Copenhagen this summer.

11 Cesar SANTIN (Bra)
Age 32 (24.02.81)
Entertaining veteran winger who has been at Copenhagen for six seasons.

24 Youssef TOUTOUH
Age 20 (06.10.92)
Copenhagen-born winger who has been capped by Denmark at under-21 level.

9 Igor VETOKELE (Bel)
Age 21 (23.03.92)
Small, with good technique, he joined Copenhagen a year ago. Born in Angola, he has been capped by Belgium U21s.

PLUS: (22) **Daniel BRAATEN** (Nor, Age 31, 25.05.82)

STADIUM

PARKEN (38,000)
Denmark's national stadium can produce a raucous atmosphere on big European nights with its steep stands and city centre location. Included in UEFA's list of four-star stadia, but unable to apply for the UEFA Champions League Final due to its capacity.

CSKA MOSCOW

Qualified directly for group stage as Russian Premier League champions
Best performance: reached the quarter-finals in 2010

RUSSIA — GROUP D

COACH

Leonid SLUTSKY
Age 42 (04.05.71)
Almost sacked last season before winning the league. His own playing career ended when he fell from a tree trying to save a cat.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

35 **Igor AKINFEEV**
Age 27 (08.04.86)
CSKA captain, he saved a penalty in his first game for the club at the age of 17. Awarded his first cap the following year.

95 **Sergei REVYAKIN**
Age 18 (02.04.95)
Back-up for Akinfeev, at 16 he became the youngest goalkeeper to play in the Russian Premier League, coming on as a sub.

PLUS: (1) **Sergei CHEPCHUGOV** (Age 28, 15.07.85)

ANALYSIS

Lack of Love demands changes up front

Last season's Russian Premier League success was CSKA's 11th national championship, but these days the "Red Army" team have only symbolic ties to the national ministry of defence. Today the club is run by a prominent local businessman, Yevgeni Giner.

Slutsky likes to play with a standard 4-2-3-1 set-up in which the two wide forward players and the central striker are expected to be constantly interchanging their positions.

Following the departure of Brazilian striker Vagner Love – who signed a new deal with CSKA in January, after a year with Flamengo in Brazil, but then joined Shandong Luneng of China for €12m in July – winger Musa now alternates with Doumbia as the attacking spearhead.

Down to earth...Musa (in red) can operate on his own up front or as a winger

CSKA's defensive line is one of the best drilled in Russia and the back four are extremely well protected by the coach's tactic of playing two men in front of them to break up opposition attacks. Slutsky has experimented by using the attack-minded Dzagoev in a more defensive, holding role when others have been injured.

The team's chances in the Champions League this season could depend on club captain and goalkeeper Akinfeev. A man of outstanding character and self-confidence, if he is at the top of his game CSKA could surprise a few people and make progress in the tournament.

Victor Gusev

4-2-3-1

DEFENDERS

6 **Aleksei BEREZUTSKI**
Age 31 (20.06.82)
Not guaranteed a place like his twin, Vasili. A centre-back or wing-back, he may miss the start of the Champions League games due to injury.

24 **Vasili BEREZUTSKI**
Age 31 (20.06.82)
Twenty minutes older than Aleksei, he has been a stalwart at the heart of the defence for CSKA and Russia alongside Ignashevich.

4 **Sergei IGNASHEVICH**
Age 34 (14.07.79)
The country's best centre-back of the last few years. Noted for his reliability, as well as a strong shot and precise long-range passing.

14 **Kirill NABABKIN**
Age 27 (08.09.86)
Talented right-back getting his place in the starting line-up alongside Ignashevich and Vasili Berezutski more often than anyone else.

42 **Georgi SCHENNIKOV**
Age 22 (27.04.91)
The son of Olympic walking star Mikhail Schennikov, the pacy left-back loves to join the attack.

5 **Viktor VASIN**
Age 25 (06.08.88)
Reserve central defender. Played one game for Russia, as a substitute in 2010.

PLUS: (13) **Mario FERNANDEZ** (Bra, Age 22, 19.09.90), (39) **Vyacheslav KARAVAEV** (Age 18, 20.05.95), (90) **Anton POLYUTKIN** (Age 20, 02.02.93)

MIDFIELDERS

19 **Aleksandrs CAUNA (Lat)**
Age 25 (19.01.88)
Wide player who has a decent shot. Had a trial with Chelsea in 2008 before moving to Russia in 2011.

10 **Alan DZAGOEV**
Age 23 (17.06.90)
Creative midfielder who now plays in a holding role. Russia's best player at Euro 2012 but not a starter under Fabio Capello.

20 **Rasmus ELM (Swe)**
Age 25 (17.03.88)
Joined CSKA in 2012 and plays in an advanced role. Good from set-pieces.

11 **Mark GONZALEZ (Chi)**
Age 29 (10.07.84)
Chile international left-winger. Quick, and a good passer, but prone to injury. Joined CSKA from Real Betis in 2009.

7 **Keisuke HONDA (Jap)**
Age 27 (13.06.86)
Playmaker who was one of the stars of the 2010 World Cup. Likes to shoot from range. A long-term target for Milan.

23 **Georgi MILANOV (Bul)**
Age 21 (19.02.92)
Signed in July for €2.7m from Litex Lovech, where he was Bulgaria's player of the year in 2012.

PLUS: (70) **Armen AMBARTSUMYAN** (Age 19, 11.04.94), (40) **Yuri BAVIN** (Age 19, 05.02.94), (15) **Dmitri EFREMOV** (Age 18, 01.04.95)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

25 **Elvir RAHIMIC (Bos)**
Age 37 (04.04.76)
Earned the nickname "Terminator" for his tackling prowess. Joined CSKA from Anzhi at the turn of the century.

21 **Zoran TOSIC (Ser)**
Age 26 (28.04.87)
Winger signed from Manchester United in the summer of 2010. Quick, with a good shot, he often comes on as a sub.

3 **Pontus WERNBLOOM (Swe)**
Age 27 (25.06.86)
Sweden international holding midfielder. Unyielding and tough, he regularly finds his name going in the referee's notebook.

FORWARDS

88 **Seydou DOUMBIA (IvC)**
Age 25 (31.12.87)
The Russian league's top scorer with 28 goals in 2011-12, he will miss CSKA's first two group games after tearing a thigh muscle.

18 **Ahmed MUSA (Nga)**
Age 20 (14.10.92)
Versatile and fast. Nigeria international who was converted from a midfielder into a striker last season and became the team's top scorer.

8 **Steven ZUBER (Swi)**
Age 22 (17.08.91)
Rising star signed from Grasshoppers this year, having made his debut at 16. Left-winger who likes to dribble and has a strong left-foot shot.

PLUS: (31) **VITINHO** (Bra, Age 19, 09.10.93)

STADIUM

ARENA KHIMKI (18,636)
While a new CSKA stadium is under construction and the artificial-turf Luzhniki is closed for reconstruction prior to the 2018 World Cup, the team use this arena – which was built in 2008 – outside Moscow. The pitch is one of the best in Russia.

Galatasaray

Qualified for group stage as Turkish champions
Best performance: Semi-finalists in 1989

TURKEY — GROUP B

COACH

Fatih TERIM
Age 60 (04.09.53)
Had three spells on the Galatasaray bridge and the same as coach of the national team (a record he is currently the joint-holder).

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

25 **Fernando MUSLERA (Uru)**
Age 27 (16.06.86)
Excellent first choice for club and country who was signed from Lazio in the summer of 2011 for €12m.

86 **UFUK Ceylan**
Age 27 (23.06.86)
Capped at under-21 level and has been in the senior squad.

PLUS: (67) **ERAY Iscan** (Age 22, 19.07.91)

ANALYSIS

Returning Terim leads the Gala revival

While the rest of Turkish football continues to be hit by the fallout from the 2011 match-fixing scandal, the revival of Galatasaray continues.

Their great Istanbul rivals Fenerbahce and Besiktas have been banned from European competition – although they both played in the early rounds of this season's competitions, before the Court of Arbitration for Sport upheld the original bans. But Galatasaray continue to enjoy success under president Unal Aysal, who was elected in 2011.

Aysal has presided over the return of coach Terim, the man who guided the club to their 2000 UEFA Cup triumph and also funded the transfer of high-profile players, notably Drogba and Sneijder.

At home in Istanbul...Eboue (left) is a key figure at Galatasaray

This summer's signings may not have been as headline-grabbing but they could still prove useful, notably teenager Bruma from Sporting Lisbon and Chedjou from Lille. They also secured Melo and Umut on permanent deals.

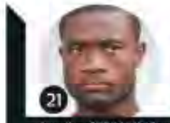
Johan Elmander was sent on loan to Norwich City, while a deal to sell prolific striker Burak to Lazio fell though.

Drawn in a group with Juventus and Real Madrid, it may be hard to repeat last season's achievement, defeat in the quarter-finals to Madrid. But stranger things have happened in Istanbul.

John Holmesmith

4-3-1-2

DEFENDERS



21 **Aurelien CHEDJOU (Cam)**
Age 28 (20.06.85)
Centre-back signed in the summer after featuring in last season's Champions League with Lille. Was on Villarreal's books as a youth.

27 **Emmanuel EBOUE (IvC)**
Age 30 (04.06.83)
Marauding right-back signed in 2011 after a half-dozen years with Arsenal. A cult hero with the fans.

5 **GOKHAN Zan**
Age 32 (07.09.81)
Although lacking in mobility, the centre-back has physical presence and guts. Tends to be prone to injury.

22 **HAKAN Balta**
Age 30 (23.03.83)
Reliable Berlin-born left-back recruited from Mersin in 2007. A veteran of 200 plus league games for Gala, he has a fine shot.

13 **Dany NOUNKEU (Cam)**
Age 27 (11.04.86)
Fiercely competitive and sturdy stopper, who began his pro career in France. Signed from Gaziantepspor at the start of last season.

26 **SEMIH Kaya**
Age 22 (24.02.91)
Central defender whose surname appropriately means "rock". Linked with clubs in Italy and England.

MIDFIELDERS

4 **Hamit ALTINTOP**
Age 30 (08.12.82)
Champions League runner-up in 2010 with Bayern Munich, he combines dynamism and a bludgeoning shot.

20 **BRUMA (Por)**
Age 18 (24.10.94)
Promising winger signed from Sporting Lisbon. A star of this summer's World Under-20s in Turkey.

6 **CEYHUN Gulselam**
Age 25 (25.12.87)
Born in Munich and was with Bayern as a youth, he can also play at centre-back.

52 **Emre COLAK**
Age 22 (20.05.91)
Left-footer blessed with great dribbling skills. A product of the club's youth system, he must improve his finishing.

3 **Felipe MELO (Bra)**
Age 30 (26.06.83)
After two seasons on loan from Juventus, he finally made the move permanent this summer. Great will to win but can overstep the disciplinary mark.

55 **SABRI Sarioglu**
Age 29 (26.07.84)
Club captain who has spent his entire pro career with Gala. As dependable in a right-sided role as at full-back.

PLUS: (7) **AYDIN Yilmaz** (Age 25, 29.01.88), (77) **Albert RIERA** (Spa, Age 31, 15.04.82), (35) **YEKTA Kurtulus** (Age 27, 1.12.85)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

8 **SELCUK Inan**
Age 28 (10.02.85)
Clever fulcrum with good passing ability, vision and tactical appreciation; in short a Turkish Xavi. Signed from Trabzonspor in 2008.

10 **Wesley SNEIJDER (Hol)**
Age 29 (09.06.84)
Has lost a step since the glory days of 2010 – he won the Champions League with Internazionale and was a World Cup runner-up – but can still turn it on when in the mood.

FORWARDS

53 **Nordin AMRABAT (Mor)**
Age 26 (31.03.87)
Inventive and elusive left-winger who was born in Holland but opted to play for the country of his parents. Did not make the grade at the Ajax academy.

17 **BURAK Yilmaz**
Age 28 (15.07.85)
Bargain buy from Trabzonspor last season, he was the league's top scorer with 24 goals. Got six more in the Champions League.

11 **Didier DROGBA (IvC)**
Age 35 (11.03.78)
Force of nature front-man still fuelled by desire for further conquests. Hero of Chelsea's Champions League Final triumph against Bayern Munich in 2012.

19 **UMUT Bulut**
Age 30 (15.03.83)
Looked lost during a spell with Toulouse in 2011-12, but has been far more convincing in his homeland.

STADIUM

TURK TELEKOM ARENA (52,000)
Opened in 2011, the purpose-built stadium replaced the Ali Sami Yen ground. It has an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* for "loudest stadium roar of a sports ground" following a recording of 131 decibels at a derby match with Fenerbahce.

JUVENTUS

Qualified directly for group stage as Serie A champions
Winners twice (1985 and 1996)

ITALY — GROUP B

COACH

Antonio CONTE
Age 44 (21.07.69)
Combining technical competence with competitive drive, he won the Serie A title in each of his first two seasons in charge.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

1 Gianluigi BUFFON
Age 35 (28.01.78)
The inspiration and guiding light for club and country, he would love another crack at holders Bayern Munich.

30 Marco STORARI
Age 36 (07.11.77)
Proved to be very useful when called on to deputise for Buffon for half a season in 2010.

PLUS (34) **RUBINHO** (Bra, Age 31, 04.08.82)

DEFENDERS

15 Andrea BARZAGLI
Age 32 (08.05.81)
Solid, experienced, no-frills defender who won the Bundesliga with Wolfsburg in 2009 and the World Cup in 2006.

19 Leonardo BONUCCI
Age 26 (01.05.87)
Of the defensive trio on which the team's foundations rest, he is arguably the most sophisticated.

3 Giorgio CHIELLINI
Age 29 (14.08.84)
An inspirational organiser at the back, he graduated from university in "company management" in 2010.

11 Paolo DE CEGLIE
Age 27 (17.09.86)
A part-time DJ who this spring released a dance record, *Moving On*. Effective down the left flank as a full-back or midfielder.

26 Stephan LICHTSTEINER
Age 29 (16.01.84)
Tireless worker on the right flank whose penchant for getting forward sometimes leaves the defence a little exposed.

5 Angelo OGBONNA
Age 25 (23.05.88)
Centre-back signed from city rivals Torino in July for €15m. Called up for Italy's Euro 2012 squad but did not make an appearance.

PLUS (4) **Martin CACERES** (Uru, Age 26, 07.04.87), (13) **Federico PELUSO** (Age 29, 20.01.84)

MIDFIELDERS

22 Kwadwo ASAMOAH (Gha)
Age 25 (09.08.88)
Made a huge impact last year in his first season. Attacking from the left wing, he is one of the most potent weapons at Conte's disposal.

33 Mauricio ISLA (Chl)
Age 25 (12.06.88)
Provides useful cover since he can play in a number of different midfield roles.

8 Claudio MARCHISIO
Age 27 (19.01.86)
Likely to miss the opening group games through injury, but remains a key figure for Juve and Italy.

7 Simone PEPE
Age 30 (30.08.83)
Wideman who is at home on either flank. His pace and energy compensate for a lack of consistency.

21 Andrea PIRLO
Age 34 (19.05.79)
Playmaker who is nearing the end of a fantastic career but remains the man who makes Juventus, and Italy, tick.

6 Paul POGBA (Fra)
Age 20 (15.03.93)
Tall, strong and skilful, he has the technical requirements to become one of the best in the world, according to Conte.

PLUS (20) **Simone PADOIN** (Age 29, 18.03.84)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

23 Arturo VIDAL (Chl)
Age 26 (22.05.87)
More mobile than Pirlo, he combines creative play with defensive cover.

FORWARDS

12 Sebastian GIOVINCO
Age 26 (26.01.87)
Stands just 5ft 5in but can look after himself. Highly mobile and able to play off either foot.

14 Fernando LLORENTE (Spa)
Age 28 (26.02.85)
Third choice behind Vucinic and Tevez, he could be in for a difficult season. Often in the Spain squad but rarely used.

27 Fabio QUAGLIARELLA
Age 30 (31.01.83)
Linked with a move to the Premier League this summer, he is a useful striker to have in reserve.

10 Carlos TEVEZ (Arg)
Age 29 (05.02.84)
Will be studied closely this season, but so far the "bad boy" appears to have earned the approval of his team-mates and coach.

9 Mirko VUCINIC (Mne)
Age 30 (01.10.83)
Enigmatic and moody, his performances alternate between games where he is world class and ones when he simply does not figure.

ANALYSIS

One prize above all else for the 'Old Lady'

When Juventus president Andrea Agnelli was asked this summer to define his seasonal objectives, his answer was a typical "we're-up-for-all-competitions" one. But in reality, having won the last two Serie A titles, the "Old Lady" may be tempted to save her best shot for the Champions League.

Perhaps club captain Buffon was more indicative when he told Italian TV that he would sacrifice three or four years of his career in order to win the competition. With reference to the 2003 Final at Old Trafford, which Juventus lost to Milan on penalties, he said: "Going all the way is not enough. I have already made it to the Final once and I didn't like losing that Final one little bit."

Eye for goal...Tevez celebrates his winner for Juve away to Sampdoria in Serie A

There is every reason to believe that Juventus will indeed prove ultra-competitive in this season's competition.

Not only does Conte's squad look all the more dangerous for the arrival of Argentinian striker Tevez, but any suggestion that the side might lack for motivation was blown out of the water by an aggressive, all-conquering start to the domestic season in which Lazio were emphatically dispatched 4-0 in the Italian Super Cup.

On top of that, Juve are still smarting from last season's comprehensive quarter-final defeat by Bayern Munich. Many in Italy feel Juventus can and will do better this time.

Paddy Agnew

3-5-2

STADIUM

JUVENTUS STADIUM (41,000)
Rebuilt from the old Stadio Delle Alpi and opened two years ago, the arena has earned Juve money at the turnstiles and points on the field. It also points the way forward for Serie A, in which Juventus are the only club to own their home stadium.

MANCHESTER CITY

Qualified directly for group stage as Premier League runners-up
Best performance: reached the group stage (2012 and 2013)

ENGLAND — GROUP D

COACH

Manuel PELLEGRINI (Chl)
Age 60 (16.09.53)
The former Malaga, Real Madrid and Villarreal coach has an excellent track record of progress in European competitions.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

1 Joe HART
Age 26 (19.04.87)
England's first-choice has suffered a dip in form recently but he remains City's No 1. His first name is actually Charles.

30 Costel PANTILIMON (Rom)
Age 26 (01.02.87)
Tallest player in the Premier League at 6ft 8in, he had been expected to leave this summer. His parents are both deaf.

DEFENDERS

22 Gael CLICHY (Fra)
Age 28 (26.07.85)
Won the Premier League title aged 18 with Arsenal and joined City in 2011.

26 Martin DEMICHELIS (Arg)
Age 32 (20.12.80)
Centre-back who was a Champions League runner-up in 2010 with Bayern Munich. Working under Pellegrini for a third time.

4 Vincent KOMPANY (Blg)
Age 27 (16.08.82)
Club captain who can also play in defensive midfield. Studying for a business degree in his spare time.

6 Joleon LESCOTT
Age 31 (16.08.82)
England international but a likely reserve this season. His versatility makes him a useful asset.

33 Matija NASTASIC (Ser)
Age 20 (28.03.93)
Serbia international centre-back who quickly established himself in the starting line-up after joining from Fiorentina in summer 2012.

5 Pablo ZABALETA (Arg)
Age 28 (16.01.85)
International right-back signed from Espanyol in 2008. Tough tackler but prone to indiscipline.

PLUS (38) **Dedryck BOYATA** (Blg, Age 22, 28.11.90), (13) **Aleksandar KOLAROV** (Ser, Age 27, 10.11.85), (2) **Micah RICHARDS** (Age 25, 24.06.88)

MIDFIELDERS

25 FERNANDINHO (Bra)
Age 28 (04.05.85)
Dynamic box-to-box operator signed from Shakhtar for £34m.

14 Javi GARCIA (Spa)
Age 26 (08.02.87)
Defensive midfielder signed from Benfica in 2012. A useful squad player who has also filled in at centre-back.

7 James MILNER
Age 27 (04.01.86)
Pacy workhorse whose workrate and versatility make him a coach's favourite. Made a record 41 appearances for England Under-21s.

8 Samir NASRI (Fra)
Age 26 (26.07.87)
Talented wideman signed from Arsenal in 2011. Rebuilding his reputation at City after falling out with Roberto Mancini last season.

15 Jesus NAVAS (Spa)
Age 27 (21.11.85)
Speedy winger who was a major summer signing from Sevilla. His elder brother Marco recently signed for League One side Bury.

17 Jack RODWELL
Age 22 (11.03.91)
Signed for £12m in 2012 but has had hamstring problems for the last two years.

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

42 Yaya TOURE (IvC)
Age 30 (13.05.83)
Versatile powerhouse who has been the driving force in City's midfield for the past two seasons.

FORWARDS

16 Sergio AGUERO (Arg)
Age 25 (02.06.88)
Stocky striker who is nicknamed "Kun" due to a childhood resemblance to a Japanese cartoon character.

10 Edin DZEKO (Bos)
Age 27 (17.03.86)
Signed from Wolfsburg in January 2012 but has yet to repeat his Bundesliga goalscoring feats.

35 Stevan JOVETIC (Mne)
Age 23 (02.11.89)
Summer signing from Fiorentina for £22m who was targeted by a number of English clubs. Can play wide or centrally behind a main striker.

9 Alvaro NEGREDO (Spa)
Age 28 (20.08.85)
Centre-forward who was a member of Spain's victorious Euro 2012 squad. Joined from Sevilla this summer.

21 David SILVA (Spa)
Age 26 (08.01.86)
Attacking midfielder mostly deployed on the left, but can also operate as a second striker. Born and raised in the Canary Islands.

ANALYSIS

Sheikhs expect progress after summer outlay

Manchester City's middle eastern owners continue to spend their way to success. This summer they hired coach Pellegrini in place of the discredited Roberto Mancini and backed their new man by putting substantial transfer funds at his disposal.

While Mancini paid the price for falling out with key dressing-room figures, Pellegrini's influence has been noted in City's transfer dealings, which were secured early in the summer window. Navas, Negredo and Jovetic will give extra attacking options while Fernandinho will be a dynamic new presence in midfield.

City's historically low European ranking has inhibited their progress in the past two seasons. Last year they were drawn with Borussia Dortmund, Real Madrid and Ajax, and finished bottom of the pile. However, this year's draw has been kinder, and they have every chance of progressing from a group that contains Bayern Munich but also the beatable CSKA Moscow and Viktoria Plzen.

High flier...Navas (right) has been brought to City to help fulfil the owners' ambitions

City are expected to develop more European pedigree under Pellegrini. The Chilean enjoyed success with Villarreal, taking them to within a missed penalty of the 2006 Final. He also took upstarts Malaga into last season's knockout stage.

That will be the minimum expected of Pellegrini from City bosses after the summer outlay.

Gavin Hamilton

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

ETIHAD STADIUM (45,500)
The City of Manchester Stadium, built for the 2002 Commonwealth Games and converted for use as a football ground by City in 2003, is now known by the name of City's sponsors, who are closely linked to owner Sheikh Mansour, following a 10-year, £340m deal.

MANCHESTER UNITED

Qualified directly for group stage as Premier League champions
Winners three times (1968, 1999 and 2008)

ENGLAND — GROUP A

MANAGER

David MOYES (Sco)
Age 50 (25.04.63)
The ex-Everton boss was said to be Alex Ferguson's choice to be his successor when he stepped down last season.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

David DE GEA (Spa)
Age 21 (07.11.90)
Spain Under-21 who has established himself as United's first choice after a shaky start.

Anders LINDEGAARD (Den)
Age 29 (13.04.84)
In his fourth season, but injuries have restricted his effectiveness and he has been tipped to leave.

PLUS (50) **Sam JOHNSTONE** (Age 20, 25.03.93)

DEFENDERS

Jonny EVANS (NI)
Age 25 (02.01.88)
Centre-back who has been with United since 2006. His younger brother Corry plays for Blackburn Rovers.

Patrice EVRA (Fra)
Age 32 (15.05.81)
Hugely consistent left-back who added goals to his game last season, scoring four times in the League. Senegalese-born France international.

Rio FERDINAND
Age 34 (01.11.78)
Centre-back and aspiring media mogul with 4.7 million Twitter followers. Announced his international retirement in May 2013.

Phil JONES
Age 21 (21.02.92)
Versatile defender who began the season at right-back but can also play in the centre and defensive midfield.

Chris SMALLING
Age 23 (22.11.89)
Centre-back who can also play at right-back. A late developer who played for Fulham before joining United in 2010.

Nemanja VIDIC (Ser)
Age 31 (21.10.81)
Club captain who now appears to be fully recovered from the serious knee injuries that restricted his appearances last season.

PLUS (28) **Alex BUTTNER** (Hol, Age 24, 11.02.89), (22) **FABIO** da Silva (Bra, Age 23, 09.07.90), (2) **RAFAEL** da Silva (Bra, Age 23, 09.07.90)

MIDFIELDERS

Michael CARRICK
Age 32 (28.01.81)
Brilliant passer who may be in the shadow of Gerrard and Lampard in the England squad but is a key figure for United.

Tom CLEVERLEY
Age 24 (12.08.89)
Youth-team product who has become a firm favourite of England manager Roy Hodgson, though not first choice at United.

Marouane FELLAINI (Bel)
Age 25 (22.11.87)
Reunited with Moyes on transfer deadline day after United paid Everton £27.5m. Born in Brussels to Moroccan parents.

Ryan GIGGS (Wal)
Age 39 (29.11.73)
The yoga keeps working wonders for the Welshman, now in his 24th season at Old Trafford.

Shinji KAGAWA (Jap)
Age 24 (17.03.89)
The most successful Japanese player in Europe, having won titles in Germany and England, but Moyes seems reluctant to play him.

Ashley YOUNG
Age 28 (09.07.85)
Winger signed from Aston Villa in 2011 and has since become a key figure for England.

PLUS (8) **ANDERSON** (Bra, Age 25, 13.04.88), (34) **Larnell COLE** (Age 20, 09.03.93), (29) **Wilfried ZAHA** (Age 20, 10.11.92)

FORWARDS

Javier HERNANDEZ (Mex)
Age 25 (01.06.88)
Enjoyed a great first season at United in 2011-12 but has since found goals harder to come by.

NANI (Por)
Age 26 (17.11.86)
Winger who was linked with a summer move away from Old Trafford but instead agreed a new five-year deal.

Wayne ROONEY
Age 27 (24.10.85)
After spending the summer agitating for a transfer to Chelsea, he now faces the challenge of playing second fiddle to Van Persie.

Antonio VALENCIA (Ecu)
Age 28 (04.08.85)
Winger who recently gave up the no7 shirt previously worn by Best and Cantona in favour of no25.

Robin VAN PERSIE (Hol)
Age 30 (06.08.83)
His 26 goals delivered the league title to United in his first season at Old Trafford after joining from Arsenal.

Danny WELBECK
Age 22 (26.11.90)
Manchester-born striker or wide attacker who has flourished since a loan at Sunderland in the 2010-11 season.

PLUS (48) **William KEANE** (Age 20, 11.01.93)

ANALYSIS

Fergie's shadow hangs over Old Trafford

No matter how much the new manager insists he is his own man, the shadow of Alex Ferguson hangs over Old Trafford.

It would be impossible for United not to be affected by the departure of Ferguson after 26 years in charge, but Moyes has been given a six-year contract – a clear sign that the Glazer family will back his long-term project.

The departure of David Gill has been equally significant. Edward Woodward, his successor as chief executive, may be great at commercial deals, but he has stuggled in the transfer market.

United may have been distracted by Rooney's dalliance with Chelsea, but they signed Fellaini for £27m on the final day of the transfer window when they could have had him for £3m less by paying his release clause in July. They also missed out on deals for Ander Herrera and Fabio Coentrao, while the best piece of business, £15m for Zaha, was done by Ferguson in January.

Zaha adds to United's many wide options, but Fellaini may not solve the problem of a lack of creativity in central midfield.

The biggest issue, though, is Rooney's future. Will he be happy to continue playing second fiddle to top scorer Van Persie?

Moyes is a relative novice in Europe, so expectations for this Champions League campaign are modest. But United still expect to reach the quarter-finals.

Gavin Hamilton

Future unclear...Rooney may tire of playing second fiddle to Van Persie

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

OLD TRAFFORD (75,765)
The second biggest football ground in England after Wembley. The "Theatre of Dreams" was recently listed as a "community asset" by the city council – much to the annoyance of the Glazer family, whose lawyers sought to prevent the move.

MARSEILLE

Qualified directly for group stage as Ligue 1 runners-up
Winners once (in 1993)

FRANCE — GROUP F

COACH

Elie BAUP
Age 58 (17.03.55)
With a reputation for discipline and rigour he took over from Didier Deschamps in 2012 and has done well on a limited budget.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Gennaro BRACIGLIANO
Age 33 (01.03.80)
Has over 200 Ligue 1 games under his belt. Signed from Nancy in 2011 but has never looked like becoming first choice.

Steve MANDANDA
Age 28 (28.03.85)
A stalwart of the club who has always been regarded as a fine keeper, but never an exceptional one.

PLUS (16) **Brice SAMBA** (Age 19, 25.04.94)

DEFENDERS

Kassim ABDALLAH (Com)
Age 26 (09.04.87)
Marseille native who joined from Sedan in the summer of 2012, the right-back has been capped by Comoros, from where his family originate.

Souleymane DIAWARA (Sen)
Age 34 (24.12.78)
Has notched up an impressive 400-odd appearances in Ligue 1, but suffered a bad ligament injury last season.

Rod FANNI
Age 31 (06.12.81)
A dependable former international signed from Rennes in 2010. Established himself at right-back after Cesar Azpilicueta was sold to Chelsea.

Lucas MENDES (Bra)
Age 23 (03.07.90)
Central defender who can also operate at left-back. Arrived from Coritiba in 2012 and soon became first choice.

Benjamin MENDY
Age 19 (17.07.94)
Signed from Le Havre this summer, the left-back has represented France at various age levels.

Jeremy MOREL
Age 29 (02.04.84)
Joined Marseille after nine seasons with Lorient, where he made his name as a hard-working left-back with decent tactical know-how.

DEFENDERS (cont)

Nicolas NKOULOU (Cam)
Age 23 (27.03.90)
Central defender who was named in the Ligue 1 team of the year in 2012 and 2013. Signed from Monaco in 2011.

MIDFIELDERS

Andre AYEW (Gha)
Age 23 (17.12.89)
The older of the two brothers at OM, he has now made his mark after struggling in his early days.

Benoit CHEYROU
Age 32 (03.05.81)
After 14 years in top-flight football the legs are giving out, but his footballing brain is still intact. His brother Bruno used to play for Liverpool.

Giannelli IMBULA
Age 21 (12.09.92)
Born in Belgium and raised in France, the defensive midfielder was Ligue 2's player of the year with Guingamp last term.

Mario LEMINA
Age 20 (01.09.93)
Central midfielder who arrived from Lorient in September. Born in Gabon but capped by France at under-21 level.

Kevin OSEI (Gha)
Age 22 (26.03.91)
Locally born, he has been with the club since the age of 12. A passport delay saw him miss out on playing for Ghana Under-20s.

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

Dimitri PAYET
Age 26 (29.03.87)
Signed from Lille in the summer for € 10m. Talented, but yet to fulfil his true potential at international level.

Alaixys ROMAO (Tog)
Age 29 (18.01.84)
Has added steel to the side since arriving from Lorient in January but gives away too many free-kicks.

Florian THAUVIN
Age 20 (26.01.93)
Attacking midfielder who was part of the France squad that won the Under-20 World Cup in the summer. Signed for € 15m from Lille.

Mathieu VALBUENA
Age 28 (28.09.84)
Tiny yet tenacious, he's not the most talented player but he has a big heart and has a habit of scoring important goals.

FORWARDS

Jordan AYEW (Gha)
Age 22 (11.09.91)
The younger Ayew is a nippy front man. The boys' father is former Marseille legend Abedi Pele.

Andre-Pierre GIGNAC
Age 27 (05.12.85)
Target man who constantly divides opinion in France with his strength and determination but suspect touch.

PLUS (29) **Saber KHELIFA** (Tun, Age 26, 14.10.86)

ANALYSIS

Second best in France are also-rans in Europe

While Paris Saint-Germain have re-invented themselves as a moneybags outfit of limitless ambition, in recent times Marseilles have found themselves going in the opposite direction.

Without the cash clout of PSG's Qatari investors, OM have reined in the spending to ensure financial stability. So it was something of a surprise when much-travelled coach Baup led his cut-price side to second place in Ligue 1 last season.

There are no world superstars in this Marseille team and few names that would be widely recognised outside France. The team scored just 42 league goals last term compared to PSG's haul of 69, and they conceded 36 to the capital club's 23 as they finished 12 points behind the champions.

It's fair to say that Marseille made the most of a league that wasn't particularly strong – although Monaco will surely help improve matters during this campaign – so it's hard to imagine OM making much of an impression in this season's Champions League.

The marquee signing of French midfielder Payet from Lille won't have any of the big boys quaking in their boots, and while Baup will have his troops well drilled and motivated, it will still be a major surprise if Marseille qualify for the knockout stage of the tournament.

Howard Johnson

On target...Payet (in white) opens his account for Marseille, against Guingamp

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

STADE VELODROME (48,000)
The roofless Velodrome is one of French football's most iconic arenas, but renovation prior to the 2016 Euros has seen the capacity cut from 60,000. When the work is completed, however, the ground will accommodate 67,000 supporters.

MILAN

Third in Serie A, beat PSV 4-1 on aggregate in play-off round
Winners seven times (1963, 1969, 1989, 1990, 1994, 2003 and 2007)

ITALY — GROUP H

COACH

Massimiliano ALLEGRI
Age 46 (11.08.67)
Even though he won the title in 2011 and steered Milan into third place last season, he always seems on the verge of a dismissal.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Christian ABBIATI
Age 36 (08.07.77)
Experienced but often underrated, he won his first Serie A title in 1999.

Marco AMELIA
Age 31 (02.04.82)
A member of Italy's 2006 World Cup-winning squad, Amelia is a very solid deputy for Abbiati.

PLUS (35) **Ferdinando COPPOLA** (Age 35, 10.06.78)

ANALYSIS

Ex-champs aren't the team they once were

On the morning after Milan had beaten PSV of Holland 3-0 in their play-off second-leg tie at the San Siro, both the club and Italian football breathed a collective sigh of relief. In the build-up to the game there had been genuine concern that the mighty *Rossoneri* might experience a humiliating failure to make the group phase.

Milan are certainly not the force they once were. Having sold Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Thiago Silva to Paris Saint-Germain last summer, they spent the first part of last season trying to create a new side. In the circumstances, coach Allegri did well to recover from a bad start, leading the team to a third-place finish.

Danger...El Shaarawy threatens against PSV in the second leg of the play-off round

Worries about Milan only increased with an unimpressive opening two games to the season: a 1-1 away draw with PSV being followed by a 2-1 defeat by Verona on the opening day of the domestic campaign.

Having finally got the show on the road, however, even this low-rent version of Milan is likely to cause problems for opponents.

With El Shaarawy and Balotelli in attack they look useful going forward, and some last-minute transfer activity saw the return of two former players in Kaka and Matri. But while the arrival of Birsa boosts options in midfield, Allegri's biggest problems – as they were last season – are likely to be in defence.

Paddy Agnew

DEFENDERS

Ignazio ABATE
Age 26 (12.11.86)
As a right-back, he often attacks better than he defends.

Kevin CONSTANT (Fra)
Age 26 (15.05.87)
Arguably Milan's most improved player last term, he often replaced De Sciglio at left-back.

Mattia DE SCIGLIO
Age 20 (20.10.92)
A former youth-team player, the left-back is one of the brightest young stars for both Italy and Milan.

Philippe MEXES (Fra)
Age 31 (30.03.82)
Highly regarded but has failed to fill the gap in central defence left by the departure of Alessandro Nesta and Thiago Silva.

Matías SILVESTRE (Arg)
Age 29 (25.09.84)
Central defender who was snapped up on loan from Internazionale.

Cristian ZAPATA (Col)
Age 27 (30.09.86)
Central defender who was formerly with Udinese and Villarreal.

PLUS (25) **Daniele BONERA** (Age 32, 31.05.81), (36) **Luca LOTTI** (Age 17, 09.11.95), (81) **Cristian ZACCARDO** (Age 31, 21.12.81)

MIDFIELDERS

Valter BIRSA (Slo)
Age 27 (07.08.86)
Signed form Genoa in August after spending last season on loan at Torino.

Nigel DE JONG (Hol)
Age 28 (30.11.84)
Much valued for his hard work and tackling in central midfield.

Riccardo MONTOLIVO
Age 28 (18.01.85)
Creative playmaker who does not always have what it takes to turn matches.

Sulley MUNTARI (Gha)
29 (27.08.84)
Played for Udinese, Portsmouth, Inter and Sunderland before joining Milan. Adds something to a side that can lack defensive "bite".

Antonio NOCERINO
Age 28 (09.04.85)
For many, he has taken over from Gennaro Gattuso as the ball winner in Milan's midfield.

Andrea POLI
Age 24 (29.09.89)
Bought from Sampdoria in the summer, he scored on his Milan debut.

PLUS (24) **Bryan CRISTANTE** (Age 18, 03.03.95), (28) **Urby EMANUELSON** (Hol, Age 27, 16.06.86)

4-3-3

FORWARDS

Mario BALOTELLI
Age 23 (12.08.90)
Has the potential to be one of the very best for Milan and Italy – if he can keep his emotions under control.

Stephan EL SHAARAWY
Age 20 (27.10.92)
Fast and mobile, he is one of the great hopes of Italian football. Had a fine first half of last term before losing his form at the end.

KAKA (Bra)
Age 31 (22.04.82)
The former World Player of the Year rejoined Milan in September after never quite making his mark at Real Madrid.

Alessandro MATRI
Age 29 (19.08.84)
Nine years after leaving Milan, he returned in August from Juventus for €11m.

Giampaolo PAZZINI
Age 29 (02.08.84)
Milan's second-top scorer in Serie A last season with 16 goals. Expected to be out until October after an op on his right knee in May.

ROBINHO (Bra)
Age 29 (25.01.84)
After a summer when he seemed destined to return home, it remains to be seen just how motivated he will be this season.

STADIUM

STADIO GIUSEPPE MEAZZA (80,018)
Although they may one day move to a purpose-built home of their own, Milan currently share the outdated San Siro with city rivals Internazionale. It is still, however, an intimidating venue for any visiting team.

NAPOLI

Qualified directly for group stage as Serie A runners-up
Best performance: reached the round of 16 in 1991 and 2012

ITALY — GROUP F

COACH

Rafael BENITEZ (Spa)
Age 53 (16.04.60)
Back in Italy after an unhappy six months at Internazionale in the wake of José Mourinho's treble-winning season.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

RAFAEL (Bra)
Age 23 (20.05.90)
Bought from Santos for €5.5m with an eye on the future, he could be in for a frustrating time as second choice behind Reina.

Pepe REINA (Spa)
Age 31 (31.08.82)
Joins his old boss at Liverpool, Benitez, because he wants to be guaranteed football in this World Cup season.

PLUS (15) **Roberto COLOMBO** (Age 38, 24.08.75)

ANALYSIS

History and home advantage could help

Despite their big investments – and sales – this summer, Napoli are not guaranteed success in this season's Champions League. And even though the club have said that they want to compete on all fronts this term, at some point it seems likely that new coach Benitez will opt to concentrate on the more reasonable objective of the Serie A title.

Given Napoli's position in the fourth pot for this stage, it was always likely that they would find themselves in a tough group – and so they were, being drawn with Arsenal, Borussia Dortmund and Marseille.

However, all is not lost for Benitez and his side. After all, two seasons ago Napoli defied expectations to eliminate Manchester City and Villarreal from the group phase, before finally falling to Chelsea in the knockout round.

Hit man...Higuain manages to shoot, despite the close attention of two Chievo defenders

And then there is the consideration that, while they can no longer call upon Edinson Cavani in attack, they do have the pure firepower of Argentinian striker Higuain, who was bought as a replacement from Real Madrid for €37million.

Add to those factors the extremely intimidating atmosphere that awaits visiting teams at the Stadio San Paolo in Naples and it is quite possible that the locals could yet again be in for some memorable Neapolitan nights.

Paddy Agnew

DEFENDERS

Raul ALBIOL (Spa)
Age 28 (04.09.85)
Bought from Real Madrid for €12m, he played under Benitez at Valencia at the start of his career.

Pablo ARMERO (Col)
Age 26 (02.11.86)
Has the pace and ability to hurt teams down the left flank.

Miguel BRITOS (Uru)
Age 28 (17.07.85)
Versatile defender who kept Cannavaro out of the side on the opening day of this season.

Paolo CANNAVARO
Age 32 (26.06.81)
Always in the shadow of his famous brother, Fabio, the current Napoli captain could face a difficult time convincing Benitez of his worth.

Christian MAGGIO
Age 31 (11.02.82)
With his willingness to get forward in attack, the right-back has long been a key weapon in both the Napoli and Italy armoury.

Bruno UVINI (Bra)
Age 22 (03.06.91)
Central defender who has been capped by Brazil. Signed from Sao Paolo last year.

PLUS (21) **Federico FERNANDEZ** (Arg, Age 24, 21.02.89), (16) **Giandomenico MESTO** (Age 31, 25.05.82)

DEFENDERS (cont)

Juan ZUNIGA (Col)
Age 28 (14.12.85)
Has an ability to hit and hurt from the depths of defence. Appeared set to leave on several occasions during the summer.

MIDFIELDERS

Valon BEHRAMI (Swi)
Age 28 (19.04.85)
Of Kosovan/Albanian origins, he brings mobility and ball-winning qualities to the midfield.

Blerim DZEMAILI (Swi)
Age 27 (12.04.86)
Another Switzerland international of East European origins – his family are Macedonian/Albanian – he is useful when coming on as a sub.

Marek HAMSIK (Slk)
Age 26 (27.07.87)
The last of Napoli's three tenors – Lavezzi and Cavani were the other two – he carries a heavy responsibility in the post-Cavani era.

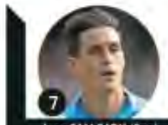
Gokhan INLER (Swi)
Age 29 (27.06.84)
Once of Udinese, he battles and works hard, and has a penchant for the long-range goal.

Josip RADOSEVIC (Cro)
Age 19 (03.04.94)
Defensive midfielder who was signed from Hajduk Split and is a full international.

PLUS (96) **Luca PALMIERO** (Age 17, 01.05.96), (60) Antonio Romano (Age 17, 23.03.96)

4-2-3-1

FORWARDS



Jose CALLEJON (Spa)
Age 26 (11.02.87)
Signed in July from Real Madrid, where he scored seven goals in just nine Champions League games.

Gonzalo HIGUAIN (Arg)
Age 26 (10.12.87)
Chose Napoli ahead of Arsenal in the summer and caused a huge scare before he had even played his first game after diving into the sea and hurting himself on submerged rocks.

Lorenzo INSIGNE
Age 22 (04.06.91)
One of the rising stars of Italian football. Small and mobile, he was the playmaker for the Italy Under-21 team which lost this summer's Euro Final in Israel to Spain.

Dries MERTENS (Blg)
Age 26 (06.05.87)
The right-footed left-winger was Benitez's first signing for the club, but will have to work hard to live up to his €9.5m price tag.

Goran PANDEV (Mac)
Age 30 (27.07.83)
Part of the 2010 treble-winning Internazionale side, he could be useful as a second-half sub.

Duvan ZAPATA (Col)
Age 22 (04.01.91)
Signed from Argentinian club Estudiantes after a move to England encountered work-permit problems.

STADIUM

STADIO SAN PAOLO (60,240)
Although there are numerous problems with the stands and pitch that need attending to, the stadium remains one of the most atmospheric in Europe. That is due, in no small part, to Napoli's hugely partisan fans who create an incredible wall of noise.

OLYMPIAKOS

Qualified directly for group stage as Greek Super League champions
Best performance: reached the quarter-finals in 1999

GREECE — GROUP C

COACH

MICHEL (Spa)
Age 50 (23.03.63)
Won the domestic double last season after joining in January, but needs a good showing in Europe to justify his annual salary of €1m.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

ANALYSIS

Seeking that first elusive European honour

Dominating the domestic league – 40 league titles, 26 Greek Cups and 16 doubles, including the last two seasons – has become old hat for Olympiakos. Leaving their mark in Europe is what owner Evangelos Marinakis craves, and the shipping magnate has made sweeping changes to make the side more attractive on the pitch and more competitive in the Champions League.

"To keep our two domestic titles is a challenge; to become better in Europe is, for certain, an ambition," says coach Michel.

"Through the process of maintaining both titles this will help us become better in the Champions League.

Strong additions to the squad such as Argentinian forward Saviola and midfielder Dominguez, Costa Rica's Campbell on loan from Arsenal, Slovakia's Weiss, N'Dinga of Congo and Spanish defender Torres are sure to assist Michel.

Joining them will be veteran Greece internationals Maniatis, club captain Papadopoulos, Manolas and Mitroglou, as well as imports Fuster, Ibagaza and Machado.

Two names who will be missing this season are both Algeria internationals. The league's leading scorer last season, Rafik Djebbour, is looking for a new team, while Djamel Abdoun has already joined Nottingham Forest.

Lou Economopoulos

Big-name signing...Argentinian forward Javier Saviola joined from Malaga this summer

4-3-3

GOALKEEPERS

42 **Balazs MEGYERI (Hun)**
Age 23 (31.03.90)
A former Hungary under-21 who used to play for Bristol City's youth team.

16 **ROBERTO (Spa)**
Age 27 (10.02.86)
On loan from Atlético Madrid, he became first choice after some outstanding performances in pre-season.

DEFENDERS

88 **Gaetan BONG (Cam)**
Age 25 (25.04.88)
Left-back signed from Valenciennes in August. Selected by France at under-21 level but capped as a full international by Cameroon.

20 **Jose HOLEBAS**
Age 29 (27.06.84)
Born in Germany to a Greek father and a Uruguayan mother, he is a Greece international.

24 **Kostas MANOLAS**
Age 22 (14.06.91)
Nephew of Greece and AEK legend Stelios Manolas, he has become a regular for the national side.

22 **Carl MEDJANI (Alg)**
Age 28 (15.05.85)
French-born central defender who switched allegiance to represent Algeria.

21 **Avraam PAPADOPOULOS**
Age 28 (03.12.84)
Born in Australia, he was sidelined for eight months after an injury at Euro 2012, but has come back as strong as ever.

30 **Leandro SALINO (Bra)**
Age 28 (22.04.85)
His vast experience, gained in his native Brazil and Portugal, has earned him a starting berth with Olympiakos.

DEFENDERS (cont)

23 **Dimitris SIOVAS**
Age 25 (16.09.88)
A regular for Greece at youth level, his aggressive, skilful performances have made him a member of the senior national squad.

35 **Alejandro DOMINGUEZ (Arg)**
Age 32 (10.06.81)
Nicknamed "Chori", he joined on a free from Rayo Vallecano in July. Won the UEFA Super Cup with Zenit in 2004.

5 **Paulo MACHADO (Por)**
Age 27 (31.03.86)
After strong showings in the Portuguese and French leagues, he was signed last season and often appears from the bench.

2 **Ioannis MANIATIS**
Age 26 (12.10.86)
Good in the tackle, he is a Greece international and has been first choice since signing two seasons ago.

8 **Delvin N'DINGA (Con)**
Age 25 (14.03.88)
Skilful addition on loan from Monaco who has plenty of stamina.

79 **Vladimir WEISS (Slk)**
Age 23 (30.11.89)
Had short spells with Manchester City, Bolton Wanderers and Rangers before moving to Greece this season.

PLUS: (14) **Andreas SAMARIS** (Age 24, 13.06.89)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

60 **Sambou YATABARE (Mli)**
Age 24 (02.03.89)
Signed from Bastia in August for €2.2m. Born in France, where his older brother, Mustapha, plays for Guingamp.

FORWARDS

26 **Joel CAMPBELL (CRC)**
Age 21 (26.06.92)
On loan from Arsenal, the Costa Rica international impressed in pre-season.

19 **David FUSTER (Spa)**
Age 31 (03.02.82)
Scored 20 goals in 67 games over the last three seasons and helped the club win the double for the last two years.

11 **Kostas MITROGLOU**
Age 25 (12.03.88)
Born in Germany and a youth academy prospect at Borussia Monchengladbach, he is now a full Greek international. Often comes off the bench to good effect.

99 **Michael OLAITAN (Nga)**
Age 20 (01.01.93)
Nigeria Under-20 who made his mark in the Greek Super League with Veria, where he played 62 games and scored 14 goals.

9 **Javier SAVIOLA (Arg)**
Age 31 (12.12.81)
Made Olympiakos his eighth club in July, in a career that includes spells with Barcelona and Real Madrid. Was the South American footballer of the year in 1999.

STADIUM

KARAISKAKIS STADIUM (33,334)
The current stadium is situated on the same spot as the historical one which had been home for Olympiakos for many decades. The old arena was demolished in May 2003 and, in just 14 months, the new, ultramodern football-only stadium was opened.

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

Qualified directly for group stage as Ligue 1 champions
Best performance: semi-finalists in 1995

FRANCE — GROUP C

COACH

Laurent BLANC
Age 47 (19.11.65)
He replaced Carlo Ancelotti in June, but despite his pedigree there are many who feel his discreet nature isn't a great fit for PSG.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

ANALYSIS

Big spenders mean business this time

PSG's second assault of the Qatari era on the Champions League shows just how quickly things can change in football.

This time last year Carlo Ancelotti was the man in charge of team affairs, with Leonardo sitting above him as sporting director, and both were saying how excited they were about the club's long-term future. A year later, neither man is still in Paris.

Ancelotti dumped the French champions very publicly as soon as Real Madrid came calling, while Leonardo resigned this summer in the wake of a 14-month touchline ban after being found guilty of barging a referee following a league match against Valenciennes in May.

So now it's former French coach Blanc who will be trying to better PSG's last term's quarter-final push. Blanc, however, is seen as lacking the charisma to lead such a glamorous club and manage the egos of the likes of Ibrahimovic, Silva and the latest big-money signing Cavani.

While this assessment of Blanc may prove to be true, PSG have so much talent in their ranks that they are a threat to anyone in the Champions League regardless of any "behind the scenes" schisms. It would perhaps still be a surprise if they were to actually win the competition in 2014, but in no way is it out of the question.

Howard Johnson

Impressive line-up...PSG team-mates (from left) Ibrahimovic, Cavani and Silva

4-2-3-1

GOALKEEPERS

1 **Nicolas DOUCHEZ**
Age 33 (22.04.80)
Joined on a free from Rennes in 2011 with a big reputation but started just four league games in his first two seasons.

30 **Salvatore SIRIGU (Ita)**
Age 26 (12.01.87)
Arrived from Palermo at the start of the Qatari revolution and has been first choice ever since.

PLUS: (16) **Mike MAIGNAN** (Age 18, 03.07.95)

DEFENDERS

13 **ALEX (Bra)**
Age 31 (17.06.82)
Added a mean streak to central defence after arriving from Chelsea for £4.2m, but faces competition for his place from Marquinhos.

6 **Zoumana CAMARA**
Age 34 (03.04.79)
Central defender whose only cap for France came at the Confederations Cup in 2001.

21 **Lucas DIGNE**
Age 20 (20.07.93)
Left-back who was part of the France side that won the Under-20 World Cup in the summer. He joined PSG from Lille for €15m in July.

26 **Christophe JALLET**
Age 29 (31.10.83)
Ultra-dependable right-back who is a fans' favourite for his no-nonsense attitude. Won his first international cap last season.

5 **MARQUINHOS (Bra)**
Age 19 (28.07.85)
A £27m price tag and a five-year deal show the esteem in which the former Roma centre-half is held. Barcelona and Manchester United also wanted him.

17 **MAXWELL (Bra)**
Age 32 (27.08.81)
Not as consistent at left-back as might have been expected since arriving from Barcelona in January. Made his Brazil debut against Switzerland in August.

PLUS: (37) **Kalifa TRAORE** (MI, Age 22, 16.02.91)

DEFENDERS (cont)

2 **Thiago SILVA (Bra)**
Age 28 (23.09.84)
Rated by many as the best defender in the world, the former Milan player has been in outstanding form since arriving for £36.6m last year.

23 **Gregory VAN DER WIEL (Hol)**
Age 25 (03.02.88)
The right-back hasn't lived up to the hype since joining PSG from Ajax in 2012 and is being kept out of the side by Jallet.

MIDFIELDERS

29 **LUCAS Moura (Bra)**
Age 21 (13.08.92)
Chose France ahead of England and Italy in January, with his £35m transfer fee prompting Alex Ferguson to say the world had gone mad.

14 **Blaise MATUIDI**
Age 26 (09.04.87)
Belies his skinny, lanky frame with powerhouse performances in the PSG engine room.

7 **Jeremy MENEZ**
Age 26 (07.05.87)
Talented but erratic, he's said to be tricky to manage and has had a tough time since returning to his homeland from Roma in 2011.

8 **Thiago MOTTA (Ita)**
Age 31 (28.08.82)
A wise old head, but his time at PSG has been plagued by injury, so he'll need a trouble-free season to convince the club of his value.

PLUS: (38) **Kingsley COMAN** (Age 17, 13.06.96)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

27 **Javier PASTORE (Arg)**
Age 24 (20.06.89)
Able to delight and infuriate in equal measure. Cost £37m from Palermo in the summer of 2011 and the jury is still out on whether he's been worth it.

25 **Adrien RABIOT**
Age 18 (03.04.95)
Powerful midfielder who spent last season on loan at Toulouse, where he made a good impression.

24 **Marco VERRATTI (Ita)**
Age 20 (05.11.92)
His €11m signing from Pescara was overshadowed by the arrival of Ibrahimovic, but he has been a revelation. A contract extension in August binds him until 2018.

FORWARDS

9 **Edinson CAVANI (Uru)**
Age 26 (14.02.87)
A proven goalscorer, his choice of PSG when leaving Napoli for £55m in the summer shows both the club's deep pockets and their limitless ambition.

10 **Zlatan IBRAHIMOVIĆ (Swe)**
Age 31 (03.10.81)
Justified his £20m fee after joining from Milan in 2012 by scoring 30 league goals in his first season as PSG won their first French title since 1994.

22 **Ezequiel LAVEZZI (Arg)**
Age 28 (03.05.85)
A tireless worker, he arrived from Napoli a year before Cavani. Only scored three goals last season so needs to up that ratio this time around.

PLUS: (35) **Hervin ONGENDA** (Age 18, 24.06.95)

STADIUM

PARC DES PRINCES (48,712)
PSG's home since 1973, the one-time national stadium has seen better days, although it remains an atmospheric arena. Due to be given a facelift for Euro 2016, but the club have already said they want to develop a bigger and more modern ground afterwards.

PORTO

Qualified directly for the group stage as Portuguese champions
Winners twice (1987 and 2004)

PORTUGAL — GROUP G

COACH

Paulo FONSECA
Age 40 (05.03.73)
Born in Mozambique, he played in Portugal for 14 years before becoming a coach. Led Pacos de Ferreira to third place last season.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

24 FABIANO (Bra)
Age 25 (29.02.88)
A reserve for most of his career, but he impressed Porto in the 2011-12 season while first choice at Olhanense.

1 HELTON (Bra)
Age 35 (18.05.78)
Enters his ninth season at Porto as the undisputed No1, even though he endured a rough patch last year.

DEFENDERS

2 DANILO (Bra)
Age 22 (15.07.91)
Speedy right-back who is better at attacking than defending but has matured since arriving from Santos two years ago.

5 Jorge FUCILE (Uru)
Age 28 (19.11.84)
Fell out of favour with the previous coach but has since regained his place and his form this season.

4 MAICON (Bra)
Age 25 (14.09.88)
Tough and strong in the air, but in and out of the team over the last couple of years. Prone to making mistakes when under pressure.

22 Eliaquim MANGALA (Fra)
Age 22 (13.02.91)
Highly rated, Porto are reported to have rejected a £45m bid from Manchester City.

30 Nicolas OTAMENDI (Arg)
Age 25 (12.02.88)
Tenacious and tough tackler who has become a key player over the last two seasons. Can play in central defence or at right-back.

13 Diego REYES (Mex)
Age 20 (19.09.92)
Gold medallist at the 2012 Olympics, he can also play in midfield and is seen as one for the future. Signed from Club America.

DEFENDERS (cont)

26 Alex SANDRO (Bra)
Age 22 (26.01.91)
Developing into one of the best left-backs in Europe. A Libertadores Cup winner with Santos before joining Porto two years ago.

MIDFIELDERS

35 Steven DEFOUR (Bel)
Age 25 (15.04.88)
Played second fiddle to Joao Moutinho last season but could have more opportunities to shine this term.

25 FERNANDO (Bra)
Age 26 (25.07.87)
Known as "the octopus", he spreads his tentacles all over midfield. Wanted by Internazionale in the summer.

3 Lucho GONZALEZ (Arg)
Age 32 (19.01.81)
A captain who leads by example. In his second stint at the club after a couple of years at Marseille.

16 Hector HERRERA (Mex)
Age 23 (19.04.90)
Signed from Pachuca in the summer to add more depth to the squad. Is known as "the fox" in his native land.

8 JOSUE
Age 23 (17.09.90)
Starred for Pacos de Ferreira last season and can play in a variety of positions, but loves nothing better than joining the attack.

PLUS: (15) **Marat IZMAILOV** (Rus, Age 30, 21.09.82)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

10 Juan QUINTERO (Col)
Age 20 (18.01.93)
Attacking midfielder who arrived in the summer and soon impressed critics and fans alike with his skill and vision.

FORWARDS

11 Nabil GHILAS (Alg)
Age 23 (20.04.90)
Signed from lowly Moreirense, where he showed great physical strength and good finishing.

19 LICA
Age 24 (08.09.88)
Burst onto the scene at Estoril last season and recently earned an international call-up. Winger with an eye for goal.

9 Jackson MARTINEZ (Col)
Age 26 (03.10.86)
Explosive, he hit 31 goals in all in his debut season in Europe, drawing comparisons with his predecessor, Radamel Falcao.

21 RICARDO
Age 19 (06.10.93)
Signed from Guimaraes, he is a skilful and speedy winger who is a good crosser but needs to improve his finishing.

17 Silvestre VARELA
Age 28 (02.02.85)
Capable of changing games with his pace and skill, but can also disappear at crucial moments.

ANALYSIS

Fonseca facing great expectations

"Thanks for back-to-back titles, now don't let the door hit you on the way out." That would be a fairly accurate description of Porto's dealings with their former coach, Vitor Pereira, who won the last two Portuguese championships, but failed to convince the board and fans with his tactics and football philosophy. He was replaced by relatively unknown 40-year-old Paulo Fonseca, who impressed by leading minnows Pacos de Ferreira to third place last season.

Fonseca's first task will be finding a way to replace stars Joao Moutinho and James Rodriguez, who both joined Monaco in the close season. Early signs show that fortune has smiled on him, with new arrivals Quintero and Lica showing tremendous promise.

Promising...new arrival Quintero (right) will help overcome the loss of some big names

Last season the two-time European Cup winners came close to knocking out Malaga in the round of 16. But with Porto reaching the quarter-finals only once since they last won the competition, under Jose Mourinho in 2004, their recent continental record is not good enough for ambitious president Jorge Nuno Pinto da Costa.

Once again, much of Porto's success will depend on striker Martinez. The Colombian was linked with Chelsea and Napoli, but stayed on and has promised to score more goals than he did last season.

Pedro Pinto

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

ESTADIO DO DRAGAO (50,000)
The second biggest stadium in Portugal, it hosted five games at Euro 2004 – including the semi-final between Greece and the Czech Republic. It has also staged a series of high-profile concerts by bands such as The Rolling Stones and Coldplay.

REAL MADRID

Qualified directly for group stage as La Liga runners-up
Winners nine times (1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1966, 1998, 2000 and 2002)

SPAIN — GROUP B

COACH

Carlo ANCELOTTI (Ita)
Age 54 (10.06.59)
Entered away from Paris Saint-Germain in June, he is one of six people to have won Europe's biggest club prize as both player and coach.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

1 Iker CASILLAS
Age 32 (20.05.81)
Captain of club and country, but not guaranteed a place this season. Injury and clashes with Mourinho ruined last term.

25 Diego LOPEZ
Age 31 (03.11.81)
Signed from Sevilla in January and started this season's league campaign as first choice.

DEFENDERS

17 Alvaro ARBELOA
Age 30 (17.01.83)
His right-back spot is under threat, but he remains reliable and disciplined. Wears an England shirt when playing computer games against Spain team-mates.

15 Dani CARVAJAL
Age 21 (11.01.92)
Returned to Madrid in the summer after the club exercised a buy-back option in his contract with Bayer Leverkusen after just one season in Germany.

12 MARCELO (Bra)
Age 25 (12.05.88)
Came back from injury last season clearly still unfit and overweight, but now getting back to his best. A threat going forwards but defensively suspect.

3 PEPE (Por)
Age 30 (26.02.83)
Quick and aggressive – sometimes too aggressive – his reputation for losing control on the pitch sits uneasily with his popularity off it.

4 Sergio RAMOS
Age 27 (30.03.86)
Athletic, talented and charismatic – but he dropped the Spanish Cup under the wheels of the team bus on the club's victory parade.

2 Raphael VARANE (Fra)
Age 20 (25.04.93)
Quick, smooth and unruffled at centre-half, he was signed from Lens as a teenager and made the first-team earlier than expected.

PLUS: (5) **Fabio COENTRAO** (Por, Age 25, 11.03.88), (18) **NACHO** (Age 23, 18.01.90)

MIDFIELDERS

14 Xabi ALONSO
Age 31 (25.11.81)
Missed this summer's Confederations Cup after a groin op, then ruled out for the first three months of the season after breaking a bone in his foot.

11 Gareth BALE (Wal)
Age 24 (16.07.89)
The world's most expensive player, he has only one winners' medal so far – the Premier Academy League, in 2006, with Southampton.

16 CASEMIRO (Bra)
Age 21 (23.02.92)
On loan from Sao Paulo for the latter half of last season, he signed a permanent deal in the summer. Could deputise for the injured Alonso.

22 Angel DI MARIA (Arg)
Age 25 (14.02.88)
Winger who looked set to be sold after the purchase of Bale, but remains at the Bernabeu.

24 Asier ILLARRAMENDI
Age 23 (08.03.90)
Central, attacking midfielder with a superb range of passing. Signed from Real Sociedad in July for €39m.

23 ISCO
Age 21 (21.04.92)
Destined to play a central role for club and country as a creative attacking force. He was a Barca fan and has a dog called "Messi".

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

6 Sami KHEDIRA (Ger)
Age 26 (04.04.87)
Likely to play a less prominent role under Ancelotti, he has gone from a deep holding berth to a more attacking role.

19 Luka MODRIC (Cro)
Age 28 (09.09.85)
A playmaker who prefers to operate from deep, he was heavily tipped for a return to the Premier League during the summer transfer window.

FORWARDS

9 Karim BENZEMA (Fra)
Age 25 (19.12.87)
His Champions League record is impressive and with Gonzalo Higuain's departure he is undisputed first choice for the first time.

20 JESE
Age 20 (26.02.93)
Scored 22 goals last season to beat Emilio Butragueno's club record for the reserve side. Also scored five times in five games at the Under-20 World Cup in the summer.

21 Alvaro MORATA
Age 20 (23.10.92)
Top scorer as Spain won this summer's Euro Under-21s. Passed through Atletico Madrid's academy and joined Real from Getafe in 2008.

7 Cristiano RONALDO (Por)
Age 28 (05.02.85)
Has broken records at every turn since joining Real in 2009. But will he be as effective in a different style? Yet to renew his contract, what does the future hold?

ANALYSIS

Quest for '*la decima*' remains an obsession

While reaching the last three Champions League semi-finals has been an improvement for Real Madrid, it is still not enough.

The European Cup defines the club and winning "*la decima*", their 10th, is an obsession. It has been over a decade now since they lifted the trophy, despite having spent over a billion euros in their pursuit of double figures.

Jose Mourinho may have departed but some of the conflicts remain. Carlo Ancelotti has taken over as coach and the early signs have been that the Italian will bring a shift in style. This may help to overcome one of the big problems that Madrid encountered over the last few seasons: brilliant on the break, they struggled to unlock teams that have waited for them.

Powerful...Ronaldo is just as good in the air as he is with the ball at his feet

With Modric, Isco, Ronaldo, Bale and Benzema there is greater creativity and a much more elaborate, patient approach. The big question, however, is does that style of play truly suit the talents of Ronaldo, in particular, and how will Ancelotti keep players happy?

Isco may have to adapt to a slightly wider position than he is used to, and even though Ronaldo has said he does not want to play as a striker he may have little choice. With Carvajal and Marcelo, rather than Arbeloa and Coentrao, Madrid have attacking full-backs, but there are doubts defensively.

Sid Lowe

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

SANTIAGO BERNABEU (85,454)
Named after former chairman Santiago Bernabeu Yeste it hosted the European Cup Final in 1957, 1969 and 1980, and the UEFA Champions League Final in 2010. It is the third-largest stadium in Europe, behind Camp Nou and Wembley Stadium.

REAL SOCIEDAD

Fourth in La Liga, they beat Lyon 4-0 on aggregate in play-off round
Best performance: reached the last 16 in 2004

SPAIN — GROUP A

COACH

Jagoba ARRASATE
Age 35 (22.04.78)
Assistant coach under Philippe Montanier; he previously managed Eibar in the third division (and reaching the play-offs).

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Claudio BRAVO (Chi)
Age 30 (13.04.83)
Steady and reliable, with excellent, swift distribution.

Enaut ZUBIKARAI
Age 29 (26.02.84)
Reliable back-up who had a season on loan at Eibar in the second tier in 2005-06.

DEFENDERS

Ion ANSOTEGI
Age 31 (13.07.82)
Began his career at Eibar before joining Sociedad's B team in 2003. Only started a handful of games over the last two seasons.

Liassine CADAMURO (Alg)
Age 25 (05.03.88)
Was playing for Souchaux reserves when Sociedad picked him up aged 18. Didn't make his debut until September 2011.

Alberto DE LA BELLA
Age 27 (02.12.85)
Has been through the youth teams at Espanyol, Villarreal and Sevilla. Joined la Real in 2009. Quick to join the attack from left-back.

Mikel GONZALEZ
Age 27 (24.09.85)
Central defender who began the season by injuring a vertebrae during gym work.

Carlos MARTINEZ
Age 27 (09.04.86)
Full-back who joined the club at 13. Competes with Estrada for a place at right-back.

Inigo MARTINEZ
Age 22 (17.05.91)
Central defender with the Spain side that won the Euro Under-21s in the summer. Has twice scored from the half-way line.

PLUS (22) **Dani ESTRADA** (Age 26, 03.01.87)

MIDFIELDERS

Jose ANGEL
Age 23 (05.09.89)
Chose Roma over Barcelona after an impressive season at Sporting Gijon, before returning to Spain, on loan to Sociedad.

Markel BERGARA
Age 27 (05.05.86)
Likely to play a central role this season, alongside the talented Pardo.

Chori CASTRO (Uru)
Age 28 (14.09.84)
Fast, clever left-sided player signed from Mallorca who is used a lot from the bench. Won three league titles with Nacional in Uruguay.

Gorka ELUSTONDO
Age 26 (18.03.87)
Brought up through the club's youth system, he is a deep lying midfielder.

Esteban GRANERO
Age 26 (02.07.87)
On loan from QPR, who were relegated from the Premier League last season.

Ruben PARDO
Age 20 (22.10.92)
Sociedad turned down a €10m bid for a player who excites the fans. He was part of the Spain squad that won the 2011 Euro Under-19s.

PLUS (23) **Javi ROS** (Age 23, 16.02.90)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

David ZURUTUZA
Age 27 (19.07.86)
His father is Basque, his mother French and he has dual nationality. Has had problems with injuries but is a player of touch and technique.

FORWARDS

Imanol AGIRRETXE
Age 26 (24.02.87)
Adept at bringing others into play and also started scoring himself over the last two seasons.

Antoine GRIEZMANN (Fra)
Age 22 (21.03.91)
A Euro Under-19 champion in 2010, but banned from international duty for a year in October 2012 after partying on the eve of an Under-21 game.

Xabi PRIETO
Age 30 (29.08.83)
Never hurried, always in control. Moved from the right wing last season and now plays behind the striker. He is the club captain.

Haris SEFEROVIC (Swi)
Age 21 (22.02.92)
Signed from Novara in Italy. He was top scorer at the Under-17 World Cup in 2009.

Carlos VELA (Mex)
Age 24 (01.03.89)
Talented and quick, he has been the team's outstanding player over the last two seasons. Most effective when coming in off the wing.

ANALYSIS

Exciting to watch and a delight to visit

Real Sociedad have qualified for the Champions League for the first time in a decade – and their return is not just good news for the Basque club, as San Sebastian is one of the most elegant costal cities in Spain and makes a superb away trip for visiting supporters.

Sociedad were arguably the best side to watch in La Liga last year – and one of the most likeable, too.

No squad had more home-grown players last term, and after a difficult start to the season they went on a run of just one defeat in over 20 games, employing a combination of neat, tidy passing and lightning swift counter-attacks. One of the key shifts was to bring the slow-motion cool creativity of Prieto into the middle of the line of three behind the forward, with pace either side of him.

Going through...Vela runs at the Lyon defence in their play-off showdown

Although Sociedad lost Asier Illarramendi to Real Madrid and their coach Philippe Montanier, who returned to France, not much else has changed. With Illarramendi gone, there is likely to be more game time for Pardo in the centre of midfield, but the style and approach remains largely the same, with talent and technique running throughout the team.

Vela and Griezmann will be expected to get forward at every opportunity and provide the explosiveness and skill up front.

Sid Lowe

3-3-3-1

STADIUM

ANOETA (32,200)
Opened in 1993, the stadium is cursed with a running track that takes away some of the atmosphere. The club are keen to remove the track and increase the stadium's capacity but plans have been blocked by the city council in the past.

SCHALKE

Finished fourth in Bundesliga, and beat PAOK 4-3 on aggregate in play-off round
Best performance: semi-finalists in 2011

GERMANY — GROUP E

COACH

Jens KELLER
Age 42 (24.11.70)
The former reserve-team boss took charge last December following the sacking of Huub Stevens and finished fourth in the League.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Ralf FAHRMANN
Age 24 (27.09.88)
Talented back-up with Under-21 caps. A little rusty after missing much of last term with damaged cruciate ligaments.

Timo HILDEBRAND
Age 34 (05.04.79)
Veteran who might not be as consistent as he was, but he remains capable of incredible saves.

DEFENDERS

Christian FUCHS (Aut)
Age 27 (07.04.86)
Left-back renowned for his overlapping, crossing ability and free-kicks.

Marco HOGER
Age 24 (16.09.89)
Solid right-back, wing-back or defensive midfielder started out in the Bayer Leverkusen youth ranks.

Benedikt HOWEDES
Age 25 (29.02.88)
Equally comfortable in central defence or at right-back, the Schalke academy graduate is the club's captain.

Joel MATIP (Cam)
Age 22 (08.08.91)
Born in the Ruhr to a German mother and father from Cameroon, the midfield holder was tipped for Germany, only to opt to play for the Africans.

Kyriakos PAPADOPOULOS (Gre)
Age 21 (23.02.92)
Combative and uncompromising centre-back signed from Olympiakos, where he made his league debut at 15.

Felipe SANTANA (Bra)
Age 27 (17.03.86)
Back-up central defender who arrived from rivals Borussia Dortmund this summer. His passing needs to improve.

DEFENDERS (cont)

Atsuto UCHIDA (Jap)
Age 25 (27.03.88)
All-action right-back in his fourth season in Gelsenkirchen. Has pace to burn and never loses his tactical discipline.

MIDFIELDERS

Dennis AOGO
Age 26 (14.01.87)
Germany wing-back or defensive midfielder recruited this summer on a one-year loan deal from Hamburg.

Kevin-Prince BOATENG (Gha)
Age 26 (06.03.87)
Scored twice for Milan in this season's Champions League play-off against PSV but can now play for Schalke following his move in August.

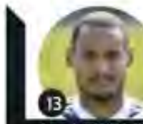
Christian CLEMENS
Age 22 (04.08.91)
Signed this season from Cologne, he is wholehearted, quick and has a powerful shot. Can operate on either flank.

Julian DRAXLER
Age 19 (20.09.93)
Attacking midfielder who became the youngest German goalscorer in the Champions League last season.

Leon GORETZKA
Age 18 (06.02.95)
Classy and confident, he joined in the summer from fellow Ruhr club Bochum.

PLUS (7) **Max MEYER** (Age 17, 18.09.95)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)



Jermaine JONES (USA)
Age 31 (03.11.81)
The Frankfurt-born son of an American father and German mother, the central midfielder is known for his hard tackling and straight talking.

Sead KOLASINAC
Age 20 (20.06.93)
Can shine as a ball-winner, at left-back or as a centre-half. Of Bosnian descent but a Germany under-21.

Roman NEUSTADTER
Age 25 (18.02.88)
Born in the Ukraine, capped by Germany, he makes up for a lack of technical prowess, with his pronounced work ethic and reading of the game.

FORWARDS

Jefferson FARFAN (Per)
Age 28 (26.10.84)
Whether used on the right-wing or as a second striker, he is a potential match-winner with his pace, capacity to surprise and marksmanship.

Klaas-Jan HUNTELAAR (Hol)
Age 30 (12.08.83)
Prolific striker who often fails to receive proper credit for his prowess outside of Holland and Germany.

Adam SZALAI (Hun)
Age 25 (09.12.87)
Recently bought from Mainz, for whom he scored 13 Bundesliga goals last term. Once a star turn for Real Madrid's reserves.

ANALYSIS

Young guns will need to be at their very best

A club with a reputation for washing its dirty linen in public, and one which gives the distinct impression of being in a permanent state of upheaval, Schalke were again in crisis mode as the new season got underway.

Only one point from their first three league games – which included losses to Wolfsburg and Hanover – and a disappointing 1-1 draw at home to PAOK in the first-leg of the Champions League play-off round, had everyone in Gelsenkirchen frenziedly looking for someone to blame, with coach Jens Keller coming under heavy fire from all quarters.

Elimination from Europe's top competition surely would have signalled the end of his reign but, fortunately for Keller, there was still time for a second wind and Schalke were resilient enough to make sure of qualification with a hard-fought 3-2 victory in the return in Greece.

Big name...newcomer Boateng (second left) has been welcomed with open arms

With a host of young talent to be let off the leash, this season was supposed to herald a new era of enterprise and fearlessness at Schalke. However, Keller has to first address his side's basic faults: defensive sloppiness, a fear of failure and out-of-form players.

An off-day for raiding full-backs Uchida and Fuchs; central defenders Howedes and Santana; creators-in chief Draxler and Farfan; or chief goal-threat Huntelaar and all European hopes could fall apart.

Nick Bowen

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

VELTINS-ARENA (54,442)
Opened in 2011, the stadium hosted the 2004 Champions League Final and five games at the 2006 World Cup, including the England v Portugal quarter-final in which Wayne Rooney was sent off. It has a retractable roof and a retractable pitch.

SHAKHTAR DONETSK

Qualified directly for group stage as Ukrainian Premier League champions
Best performance: reached the quarter-finals in 2011

UKRAINE — GROUP A

COACH

Mircea LUCESCU (Rom)
Age 68 (29.07.45)
An English-style manager who has sweeping powers over player recruitment. Only about Brazilian players and now has it.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Anton KANIBOLOTSKYI — **Age 25 (16.05.84)**
Promising keeper who is now a real contender for first choice since being signed from Dnipro in 2012.

Andriy PYATOV — **Age 29 (28.06.84)**
Current international no1 who has lost and regained his status several times since joining the club from Vorskla in 2007.

DEFENDERS

Dmytro CHYGRYNSKIY — **Age 26 (07.11.86)**
Central defender who returned to Shakhtar in 2010 after a poor season at Barcelona, with the Ukrainians making a €10m profit on the deal.

Serhiy KRYVTSOV — **Age 22 (15.03.91)**
Central defender or holding midfielder who has failed, so far, to win a first-choice place after signing from Metalurh Zaporizhya in 2010.

Oleksandr KUCHER — **Age 30 (22.10.82)**
Vastly experienced central defender. Industrious and battling, he made his name with Shakhtar after joining in 2006 from Metalist.

Yaroslav RAKITSKIY — **Age 24 (03.08.89)**
Powerful central defender who can also play in midfield. Current international, he has a strong long-distance shot.

Vyacheslav SHEVCHUK — **Age 34 (13.05.79)**
Veteran left-back, who is in great physical shape. Established himself after the departure of Razvan Rat to West Ham United.

Darijo SRNA (Cro) — **Age 31 (01.05.82)**
Quick and skilful on the right flank. Captain, dressing-room motivator and master of free-kicks.

PLUS (4) **Oleksandr VOLOVYK** (Age 27, 28.10.85)

MIDFIELDERS

BERNARD (Bra) — **Age 20 (08.09.92)**
Signed in August for €25m after winning the Libertadores Cup with Atletico Mineiro. Had hormone-growth treatment as a boy.

Douglas COSTA (Bra) — **Age 22 (14.09.90)**
Quick, with a typical Brazilian touch, he was initially in the shadow of Willian after joining from Gremio in 2010.

FERNANDO (Bra) — **Age 21 (03.03.92)**
Signed this summer from Gremio as the replacement for Fernandinho. Battler with good vision and individual skills. Current international.

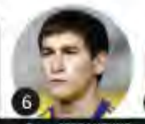
FRED (Bra) — **Age 20 (05.03.93)**
Nippy around the pitch and moves the ball on quickly. Joined from Internacional and scored twice on his debut, in the Ukrainian Super Cup.

Tomas HUBSCHMAN (CzR) — **Age 31 (04.09.81)**
Defensive, holding midfielder with a good awareness. Has spent nine seasons in Donetsk since joining from Sparta Prague.

Vasyl KOBIN — **Age 28 (24.05.85)**
Full international who plays on the right flank.

PLUS (24) **Dmytro HRECHYSHKIN** (Age 21, 22.09.91), (77) **ILSINHO** (Bra, Age 27, 12.10.85)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)



Taras STEPANENKO — **Age 24 (08.08.89)**
Defensive midfielder who is a former captain of Ukraine's under-21 side.

TAISON (Bra) — **Age 25 (13.01.88)**
A Libertadores Cup winner in 2010 with Internacional, he joined Shakhtar in January, via Metalist.

Alex TEIXEIRA (Bra) — **Age 23 (06.01.90)**
Playmaker who was signed from Vasco da Gama in 2010. Came to prominence last season, helping the club to win all three domestic trophies.

FORWARDS

Luiz ADRIANO (Bra) — **Age 26 (12.04.87)**
Target man given a one-match ban last season for unsporting behaviour after scoring against Nordsjaelland in the Champions League.

EDUARDO (Cro) — **Age 30 (25.02.83)**
Brazil-born Croatia international signed from Arsenal in 2010. Has a habit of scoring when coming off the subs' bench.

Facundo FERREYRA (Arg) — **Age 22 (14.03.91)**
Signed this summer from Velez Sarsfield, where he was top scorer in their 2012 league-winning campaign.

ANALYSIS

More Brazilian imports for Lucescu's side

There is a new era beginning at Shakhtar – and, as usual, it is founded on Brazilians.

Midfield star Willian left for Russian side Anzhi in the winter and he was followed in the summer by Fernandinho, who went to Manchester City, and Henrykh Mkhitaryan, who joined Borussia Dortmund.

"We've earned big money but it would be very difficult to find proper replacements for such valuable players," complained veteran coach Lucescu.

He has, however, managed to fill the holes in his squad in his usual manner, raiding Brazil for newcomers such as Fred of Internacional, Fernando of Gremio, Bernard of Atletico Mineiro and Fluminense's Wellington Nem. Added to these were the signings of Ferreyra from Velez Sarsfield and powerful Ukrainian striker Shynder.

Champions again...owner Akhmetov (centre left) celebrates with coach Lucescu

The most impressive arrival has been current Brazil international Bernard, for whom Rinat Akhmetov – the club's owner and the richest man in the Ukraine – broke Shakhtar's transfer record.

With all their big signings being aged between 19 to 21, the future looks extremely promising for the Ukrainian champions. But whether they will successfully accommodate the newcomers into the team structure in time to make an impression this season remains to be seen.

Oleg Zadernovsky

4-1-3-1-1

STADIUM

DONBASS ARENA (52,000)
Opened in August 2009, at a cost of US$400million, and hosted five matches during Euro 2012 – including the semi-final between Portugal and Spain. Designed by those responsible for Bayern's Allianz Arena and the National Stadium in Beijing.

STEAUA BUCHAREST

Romanian champions, they beat Vardar, Dinamo Tbilisi and Legia Warsaw to reach the group stage
Winners once (1986)

ROMANIA — GROUP E

COACH

Laurentiu REGHECAMPF
Age 37 (19.09.75)
Worked in Russia and Germany, he guided Steaua to a first league triumph for seven years and says his team are dark horses.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

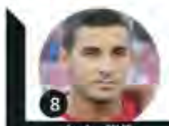
GOALKEEPERS

Florin NITA — **Age 26 (03.07.87)**
Has had limited opportunities but Reghecampf rates him highly.

Ciprian TATARUSANU — **Age 27 (09.02.86)**
First choice for club and country, he was criticised for lacking consistency in his first two seasons but is now a key player.

PLUS (95) **Valentin COJOCARU** (Age 17, 01.10.95)

DEFENDERS



Lucian FILIP — **Age 22 (25.09.90)**
Prone to mistakes, but Reghecampf – who was also his coach at Snagov and Chajna – has stood by him.

Florin GARDOS — **Age 24 (29.10.88)**
Expects to be more involved after the exit of Chiriches. One of the country's best central defenders.

Daniel GEORGIEVSKI (Mac) — **Age 25 (17.02.88)**
Brought in for free in 2012, he has quickly become a regular in the starting line-up. Jose Mourinho is a big admirer.

Iasmin LATOVLEVICI — **Age 27 (11.05.86)**
Attack-minded and powerful, he turned down moves to France, England and Italy to fulfil his Champions League dream with Steaua.

Lukasz SZUKALA (Pol) — **Age 29 (26.05.84)**
Strong in the air, he was convinced by Reghecampf to join him at Steaua in 2012. The two are good friends since playing together at Alemannia Aachen.

Fernando VARELA (CVI) — **Age 25 (26.11.87)**
Signed from Vaslui just in time to make Steaua's Champions League squad, he will compete with Gardos for a place alongside Szukala.

MIDFIELDERS

Alexandru BOURCEANU — **Age 28 (24.04.85)**
Regarded as Steaua's important player, the club's captain signed a new contract and draws comparisons with Gennaro Gattuso for his determination.

Alexandru CHIPCIU — **Age 24 (18.05.89)**
Influential playmaker, he broke his collarbone in the Bucharest derby against Dinamo in May but is expected back in October.

Adrian CRISTEA — **Age 29 (30.11.83)**
Chose Steaua instead of a lucrative move to Azerbaijan after Becali negotiated a move from jail.

Ionut NEAGU — **Age 23 (26.10.89)**
Signed at Becali's insistence, he is a defensive midfielder who will have a tough time unseating Pintilii or Bourceanu.

Mihai PINTILII — **Age 28 (09.11.84)**
Gels superbly with Bourceanu and has showed significant improvement since joining from Panduri in 2012. A regular for club and country.

Cristian TANASE — **Age 26 (18.02.87)**
Nations team player who is mostly used on the left. Joined from his hometown club Arges Pitesti in 2009.

PLUS (11) **Andrei PREPELITA** (Age 27, 08.12.85), (22) **Paul PIRVULESCU** (Age 25, 11.08.88)

FORWARDS

Gabriel IANCU — **Age 19 (15.04.94)**
"He's a true no10, just like me; he can shine for Real Madrid or Barcelona," says Gheorghe Hagi. Not yet a regular, "Gabi" is seen as the next big thing.

Pantelis KAPETANOS (Gre) — **Age 30 (08.06.83)**
Back after two and a half years at CFR Cluj, the fans will expect goals from one of the league's best imports.

Federico PIOVACCARI (Ita) — **Age 29 (01.09.84)**
On loan from Sampdoria, he struggled early on but scored against Legia in the Champions League qualifying round.

Adrian POPA — **Age 25 (24.07.88)**
Got his chance when Chipciu was injured and has kept his place. Lightning quick and unpredictable.

Nicolae STANCIU — **Age 20 (07.05.93)**
Having been offered trials by some of the best teams in Europe as a boy he eventually signed for Vaslui in 2011. Reghecampf hopes he can fulfil his enormous potential at Steaua.

Leandro TATU (Bra) — **Age 31 (26.04.82)**
Can be used as a striker, but also able to play in every position behind the main attacker. Not a born goalscorer but seen as an important asset off the bench.

ANALYSIS

Steaua upgrade for Champions League challenge

Steaua supporters feared the worst following the arrest of club owner Gigi Becali in May and his subsequent imprisonment.

Without the hugely influential but controversial Becali, many worried that the club would lose its most important players over the summer. In the end, top scorer Raul Rusescu (Sevilla, €2.2m) and classy defender Vlad Chiriches (Tottenham, €9.5m) moved for financial reasons.

However, several important domestic players have been brought in to cover the gaps and coach Reghecampf expects his side to compete for qualification for the knockout stage. "That's what I'm here for," he says. "We'll fight to make it happen."

Play-off joy...Steaua celebrate scoring against Legia Warsaw in the qualifying rounds

Optimism is not just high among the players, either. Tickets for Steaua's three home games – against Chelsea, Schalke and Basle – are selling fast, which confirms the fans' belief in the team's ambitions.

And money won't become a problem for Steaua this season. Becali keeps in contact with the club from his prison cell via his weekly phone call and he has personally intervened to secure four important transfers.

Tactically, Steaua will keep the 4-2-3-1 formation that put them on the way to glory last season. Reghecampf has tried out other systems, but he felt that 3-4-3 and 4-3-3 didn't get the most out of his squad.

Emanuel Rosu

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

ARENA NATIONALA (55,600)
The national stadium, in the Romanian capital, has been Steaua's home for big games since its opening in September 2011. Club officials expect the Arena to be sold out for all the three Champions League group stage games.

VIKTORIA PLZEN

Czech Republic champions, they beat Zeljeznicar, Nomme Kalju and Maribor to reach the group stage
Best performance: reached the group stage in 2012

CZECH REPUBLIC — GROUP D

COACH

Pavel VRBA
Age 49 (06.12.63)
Considered the Czech Republic's best coach, he has transformed provincial Plzen. Had previously won the Slovak title with Zilina.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Petr BOLEK
Age 29 (13.06.84)
Was expected to become first choice when he joined from Slovak club Senice last year but has yet to make his mark.

Matus KOZACIK
Age 29 (27.12.83)
Signed in 2012, initially as back-up but now undisputed first choice. Best in the league last term.2

PLUS: (33) **Roman PAVLIK** (Age 37, 17.01.76)

DEFENDERS

Marian CISOVSKY
Age 33 (02.11.79)
A regular fixture at the heart of defence, he was the Champions League qualification phase's joint top-scorer with five goals.

Lukas HEJDA
Age 23 (09.03.90)
Member of the Sparta Prague squad that won the Czech League in 2010, he can also play as a left-sided midfielder.

Roman HUBNIK
Age 29 (06.06.84)
Tall, powerful and experienced central defender signed from Hertha Berlin. Part of the Czech Euro 2012 squad.

David LIMBERSKY
Age 29 (06.10.83)
Speedy, skilful left-back for both club and country. A product of the Plzen youth system, he rejoined the club from Sparta Prague in 2005.

Vaclav PROCHAZKA
Age 29 (08.05.84)
Began his career at Plzen and re-joined his former club from Mlada Boleslav last year. Made his international debut in an August friendly.

Frantisek RAJTORAL
Age 27 (12.03.86)
Right-sided defender or midfielder. Was part of the Czech Euro 2012 squad but has often been overlooked in favour of Reznik and Petrzela this season.

DEFENDERS (cont)

Radim REZNIK
Age 24 (20.01.89)
Right-back who was the only member of the squad to play every minute of the 10 games of the season. A former under-21 star.

MIDFIELDERS

Tomas HORAVA
Age 25 (29.05.88)
Signed from Sigma Olomouc as a long-term successor to Horvath but currently plays alongside him.

Pavel HORVATH
Age 38 (22.04.75)
Unlikely-looking but gifted playmaker still the heartbeat of the team. An entertainer on and off the pitch.

Daniel KOLAR
Age 27 (27.10.85)
An established starter who is on the fringes of the national team. Has flourished in Plzen since leaving title rivals Sparta Prague.

Jan KOVARIK
Age 25 (19.06.88)
Left-sided player signed from Baumit Jablonec in January. Currently studying for his high-school diploma with plans to get a degree.

Milan PETRZELA
Age 30 (19.06.83)
Agile right-sided Czech Euro 2012 squad member. Rejoined Plzen over the summer after an unhappy year in Germany.

PLUS: (5) **Marek HANOUSEK** (Age 22, 06.08.91), (25) **Zdenek KOUKAL** (Age 29, 14.03.84)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

Martin POSPISIL
Age 22 (26.06.91)
Recent signing from Sigma Olomouc. Intelligent and creative and seen as a natural replacement for Bundesliga-bound Vladimir Darida.

Mladen VESELINOVIC (Bos)
Age 20 (04.01.93)
Small, creative and likened to Luka Modric in his style of play.

FORWARDS

Marek BAKOS
Age 30 (15.04.83)
First choice for the past three seasons but missed the start of the new campaign with an ankle injury and faces tough competition to get back into the team.

Michal DURIS
Age 25 (01.06.88)
Can also play as a wide midfielder. Has a habit of coming off the bench to score important goals.

Stanislav TECL
Age 23 (01.09.90)
Beginning to look more settled after a high-profile transfer from Vysocina Jihlava in January. Earned a national team call-up last season.

Tomas WAGNER
Age 23 (06.03.90)
Initially struggled and was loaned back to former club Pribram for six months. But since his return he has flourished as a stand-in for Bakos.

ANALYSIS

Vrba keeping his feet on the ground

Viktoria Plzen are a talented side, capable of the occasional upset, but coach Vrba is under no illusions about the quality of the opposition that his team face in the group phase. "If we got four or five points, we'd be very happy," he said after the draw.

Third place is the full extent of Plzen's Group D ambitions, but the west Bohemians will be no pushovers. Czech champions twice in the past three years, they have adapted quickly to European football.

They reached the Champions League group phase at the first attempt then topped their Europa League group ahead of Atletico Madrid last season, en route to a memorable 5-0 aggregate win over Napoli in the knockout phase of the tournament.

On their way...Plzen celebrate a goal against Maribor in the first leg of their play-off game

National team midfielder Vladimir Darida's move to Freiburg is a blow but new signings – among them wide man Petrzela, seasoned central defender Hubnik, and a handful of talented youngsters – mean Vrba's squad has more strength in depth than before.

Facing Bayern Munich and Manchester City means Plzen will undoubtedly be forced to curb their natural attacking tendencies, but Vrba's commitment to attractive football is admirable.

Plzen will be allowed to play group games at their own stadium, having been forced to play 2011's "home" ties in Prague.

Sam Beckwith

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

DOOSAN ARENA (11,400)
Popularly known as Struncovy Sady, Plzen's riverside home underwent substantial reconstruction in 2011 but holds nowhere near its original capacity of 35,000.

ZENIT

Second in Russian Premier League, they beat Nordsjaelland 6-0 on aggregate in the play-off round
Best performance: reached the round of 16 in 2012

RUSSIA — GROUP G

COACH

Luciano SPALLETTI (Ita)
Age 54 (07.03.59)
Joined Zenit from Roma in 2009 and has a contract until 2015. Won the league title in 2010 and 2012.

(All ages as of 17.09.13)

GOALKEEPERS

Yuri LODYGIN (Gre)
Age 23 (26.05.90)
Signed this season to replace the injured Malafeev. Born in Russia, but won under-21 caps for Greece.

Vyacheslav MALAFEEV
Age 34 (04.03.79)
First choice at Euro 2012 but has since refused to play for the national team.

PLUS: (30) **Yuri ZHEVNOV** (Bk, 17.04.81)

DEFENDERS

Aleksandr ANYUKOV
Age 30 (28.09.82)
Attacking right-back who is fast, physical and a regular in the national team.

Tomas HUBOCAN (Slk)
Age 27 (17.09.85)
Arrived in 2008 and has improved a lot since. Can play at left-back or centre-half.

Nicolas LOMBAERTS (Bel)
Age 28 (20.03.85)
Fearless and reliable central defender who is good in the air. Has just returned from another bad injury.

Aleksandr LUKOVIC (Ser)
Age 30 (23.10.82)
Aggressive left-back who passes well, but may lose his place in the starting line-up to Smolnikov.

Luis NETO (Por)
Age 25 (26.05.88)
Tall centre-back who is good in the air, both defensively and in attack. Signed in February 2013.

Igor SMOLNIKOV
Age 25 (08.08.88)
Arrived from Krasnodar in the summer and became first choice at left-back.

PLUS: (3) **Cristian ANSALDI** (Arg, Age 26, 20.09.86), (4) **Domenico CRISCITO** (Ita, Age 26, 30.12.86), (24)

MIDFIELDERS

Vladimir BYSTROV
Age 29 (31.01.84)
Right-winger who left Zenit and spent four years at rivals Spartak Moscow before returning.

DANNY (Por)
Age 30 (07.08.83)
Plays all across midfield. Bought for €30m from Dynamo Moscow in 2008 and has tattoos of his former club.

Viktor FAYZULIN
Age 27 (22.04.86)
Attacking midfielder who has been an important part of the national team since 2012, under Fabio Capello.

Oleg SHATOV
Age 23 (29.07.90)
Made his debut for Russia in February and joined Zenit from Anzhi in August.

Roman SHIROKOV
Age 32 (06.07.81)
An experienced playmaker who often comes from deep to score. Russian international.

Anatoliy TYMOSHCHUK (Ukr)
Age 34 (30.03.79)
Experienced holding midfielder who returned to Zenit this season after four years with Bayern Munich.

PLUS: (99) **Ivan SOLOVYEV** (Age 20, 29.03.93)

MIDFIELDERS (cont)

Axel WITSEL (Bel)
Age 24 (12.01.89)
Central or right-sided midfielder who is good defensively and in attack. Signed from Benfica for €40m in 2012.

Konstantin ZYRYANOV
Age 35 (05.10.77)
Only began his Russia career at 28, but made the Euro 2008 All-Star Team. Now retired from international football.

FORWARDS

Andrei ARSHAVIN
Age 32 (29.05.81)
Probably Russia's best playmaker of the last decade. Returned to Zenit from Arsenal in July 2013 following a disappointing spell in London.

Aleksandr BUKHAROV
Age 28 (12.03.85)
Tall and powerful ex-Rubin striker mostly used as a reserve.

HULK (Bra)
Age 27 (25.07.86)
Powerful with a strong shot. Named after the comic-book hero. Signed from Porto for a Russian record sum of €60m in 2012.

Aleksandr KERZHAKOV
Age 30 (27.11.82)
The club's top scorer was criticised after Euro 2012 where he failed to score despite several good opportunities.

ANALYSIS

Zenit aim to make their mark this season

Owned by the powerful Gazprom company, Zenit are the richest club in Russia. And as winners of the UEFA Cup and the UEFA Super Cup in the past, attentions have now turned to Champions League success.

Having lost their best defenders – left-back Domenico Criscito was seriously injured in a pre-season friendly in February, while centre-back Bruno Alves was sold to Fenerbahce – Zenit have had to rearrange their side with the help of new signings. The team now looks solid at the back once more, especially with the reliable Lodygin in goal.

Another even more drastic loss saw holding midfielder and national captain Igor Denisov move to Anzhi, and then on to Dynamo Moscow in the course of the summer. As a result, Tymoshchuk now comes in alongside Witsel in front of the back four. Meanwhile, Arshavin can swap from the wing to the centre or up front as a lone striker. The link-up play between Anyukov and Bystrov on the right is fast and co-ordinated, while Smolnikov and Danny may develop a similar understanding on the left.

Team spirit...Witsel (second left) joins his Zenit team-mates in celebration of a goal

The creativity of Danny and Shirokov is key to Zenit's game, but they could come under pressure from Zyryanov and Fayzulin. Hulk, meanwhile, often attacks from the right wing.

Victor Gusev

4-2-3-1

STADIUM

PETROVSKY STADIUM (21,107)
Situated on the banks of the Neva river, the original stadium was built in 1925. Destroyed during World War II, it was rebuilt in 1960 and updated in 1994 for the Goodwill Games. The ground is part of a complex that hosts sports other than football.

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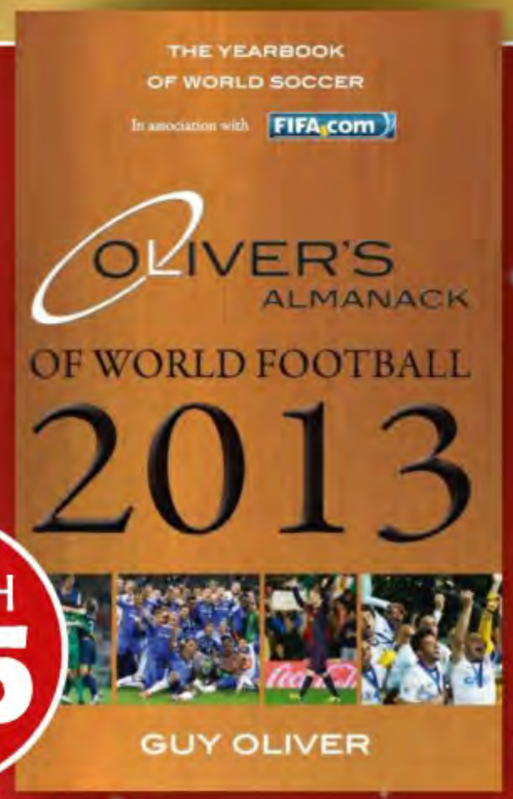

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THE QUALIFIERS AUSTRALIA

Quality in short supply

Ageing Socceroos need a miracle in Brazil.
By Les Murray

Rio here we come...Kennedy (no9) celebrates his goal against Iraq that put Australia in the finals next year

The repeated headline was "Jesus Saves" after Australia sealed their place in Brazil 2014 with an agonising 1-0 win over Iraq in June.

The Socceroos' tall centre-forward Josh Kennedy, dubbed "Jesus" by the fans for his long dark hair and beard earlier in his career, rose majestically to head home the winner in the 83rd minute of a rain-sodden game in Sydney in front of 83,000 fans.

It was a source of great relief and the end of a painful campaign which showed up Australia as something less than the dominant force in Asia that they had seen themselves as since joining the Asian Football Confederation in 2005. On their rocky qualifying road the Aussies, at times, struggled against even low-tier opponents such as Jordan, Oman and Thailand, suggesting that Asian football standards have lifted while Australia's have slumped.

One could say that this team is a long way from the so-called "golden generation" that saw Australia into the last 16 of the 2006 World Cup. But the fact is many of those players are either still in the team or on the fringes of it, notably Mark Schwarzer, Lucas Neill, Mark Bresciano, Luke Wilkshire, Harry Kewell, Tim Cahill and Archie Thompson.

Gifted youngsters rarely get a chance due to coach Holger Osieck's reluctance to regenerate his squad. This in turn is putting enormous pressure on him as social media becomes awash with "Holger out" slogans.

Little wonder, then, that fans and media commentators alike are looking dimly at Australia's prospects in next year's World Cup – as well as the Asian Cup which Australia will be hosting seven months later. WS

For the record

QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN
THIRD ROUND, GROUP D

02.09.11	Thailand (h)	2-1
06.09.11	Saudi Arabia (a)	3-1
11.10.11	Oman (h)	3-0
11.10.11	Oman (a)	0-1
15.11.11	Thailand (a)	1-0
29.02.12	Saudi Arabia (h)	4-2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia	6	5	0	1	13	5	15
Oman	6	2	2	2	3	6	8
Saudi Arabia	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
Thailand	6	1	1	4	4	8	4

FOURTH ROUND, GROUP B

08.06.12	Oman (a)	0-0
12.06.12	Japan (h)	1-1
11.09.12	Jordan (a)	1-2
16.10.12	Iraq (a)	2-1
26.03.13	Oman (h)	2-2
04.06.13	Japan (a)	1-1
11.06.13	Jordan (h)	4-0
18.06.13	Iraq (h)	1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	8	5	2	1	16	5	17
Australia	8	3	4	1	12	7	13
Jordan	8	3	1	4	7	16	10
Oman	8	2	3	3	7	10	9
Iraq	8	1	2	5	4	8	5

Players used in qualifiers

THIRTEEN GAMES
Lucas NEILL (1,170 mins), Mark SCHWARZER (1,170 mins), Luke WILKSHIRE (1,162 mins), Matt McKAY (1,144 mins), Robbie KRUSE (590 mins)
ELEVEN
Brett HOLMAN (905 mins)
NINE
Tim CAHILL (691 mins), Alex BROSQUE (545 mins)
EIGHT
Carl VALERI (720 mins), Saša OGNENOVSKI (644 mins), Mark BRESCIANO (531 mins), Archie THOMPSON (154 mins)
SEVEN
Matthew SPIRANOVIC (608 mins), Mile JEDINAK (584 mins)
SIX
Josh KENNEDY (457 mins), Mark MILLIGAN (404 mins)
FIVE
Brett EMERTON (376 mins), Tommy OAR (264 mins)
FOUR
David CARNEY (278 mins)
THREE
Jade NORTH (270 mins), Michael ZULLO (256 mins), Harry KEWELL (203 mins), Neil KILKENNY (92 mins)
TWO
Rhys WILLIAMS (146 mins), James TROISI (64 mins), James HOLLAND (53 mins), Tom ROGIC (40 mins), Danko VIDOSIC (21 mins)
ONE
Robert CORNTHWAITE (90 mins), Adam FEDERICI (90 mins), Michael THWAITE (90 mins), Nikita RUKAVYTSYA (26 mins), Nick CARLE (3 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFIERS
FIVE GOALS
Josh KENNEDY
THREE
Alex BROSQUE, Tim CAHILL, Brett HOLMAN
TWO
Archie THOMPSON, Luke WILKSHIRE
ONE
Mark BRESCIANO, Brett EMERTON, Mile JEDINAK, Harry KEWELL, Robbie KRUSE, Lucas NEILL, Tommy OAR

The coach

Under pressure...Osiek

Holger Osieck

The 65-year-old German is a former CONCACAF Gold Cup winner with Canada but has no World Cup finals experience, other than as Franz Beckenbauer's assistant with West Germany in 1990. Not seen as a modern technician, he is unlikely to be anything other than defensive in Brazil.

The key players

Robbie Kruse

One of the few new faces brought through under Osieck, the 24-year old Bayer Leverkusen wide man can provide the side with attacking zest.

Mark Bresciano

The former Parma, Palermo and Lazio midfielder remains Australia's most creative player. If he doesn't get blotted out of the game, his pinpoint passes and crosses can cause a lot of damage.

Tim Cahill

Though the former Everton midfielder is now at New York Red Bulls, he still has a fabulous scoring rate and remains his country's most lethal finisher. The question will be the supply.

Finishing power...Cahill

Creativity...Bresciano

Attacking verve...Kruse

The unanswered questions

Who will be the coach?

Osieck's tottering qualifying campaign against largely low-tier opponents – to say nothing of the 6-0 drubbing by Brazil in a friendly – makes him vulnerable and a new man may well be brought in for the rescue work.

Which of the old timers will survive?

Mark Schwarzer will be 41 by next June. Lucas Neill, Mark Bresciano, Saša Ognenovski, Harry Kewell and Tim Cahill will all be 34 plus.

Will Tom Rogic get his chance?

The 20-year-old Celtic starlet is widely seen in Australia as the country's most talented player since the emergence of Mark Viduka, but he is yet to start in a meaningful game for his country.

Great expectations...Rogic

Reasons to be cheerful

The indomitable Aussie spirit

It is rare that an Australian team bottles it or is fearful of any opponent. The renowned winning spirit and steely attitude are bound to be on display once again.

Mark Schwarzer's reliability

The goalkeeper has seen it all when it comes to involvement in big games and big tournaments. Despite his gathering years – and assuming he is selected – his experience will be invaluable.

Big-match temperament...Schwarzer

Tommy Oar

The 21-year-old has started Australia's last four games and many would argue it should have been more. He has explosive pace, good feet and is a beacon of hope for the country's future.

Reasons to be fearful

Ageing team, inexperience among youth

The coach's reluctance to trust in youth is a double whammy. It has allowed the survival of ageing players who have slowed, which in turn has denied the next generation necessary experience.

Old-fashioned playing system

Though Osieck has recently turned to 4-2-3-1 he remains a fan of 4-4-2, which is rarely effective against modern teams these days. It also invites the long-ball game, to which Australia often resort when the chips are down.

Lack of pace in defence and no left-back

The twin centre-backs have been veterans Neill and Ognenovski, so pace is in short supply. The team also lacks a specialist left-back.

Keir Radnedge

THE INSIDER

The expert view on events off the pitch

Qatar: a question of timing

With nine years until the 2022 World Cup, there is plenty of time to debate the finer details

Comfortable viewing...fans watch Qatar play a friendly international in Doha

On October 4, FIFA's executive committee is likely to accede to the wishes of president Sepp Blatter and decide that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar should be switched out of the summer months to save the poor fans from being incinerated in the Gulf heat.

The fact millions of Arabs have survived in the region for thousands of years appears to have been ignored amid western European concerns for health and safety.

Also, FIFA's scheduling of previous World Cups and kick-off times to suit television – and to hell with players and fans – appears, conveniently, to have been forgotten. Mexico 1970 and 1986, southern Spain in 1982, and in Pasadena in 1994 it was so intense that reporters' laptops bent and buckled in the sun.

As a digression, it was intriguing to hear Greg Dyke, the new chairman of the Football Association, endorse a date change out of vehement concern for fans. Presumably the FA, under his leadership, will now switch the FA Cup Final and semi-finals back to afternoon kick-offs from messy 5.15pm starts so that northern-based fans may travel home conveniently afterwards.

This also all supposes that Brazilians, Argentinians, Africans and many Asian players did not learn their football playing in hot temperatures on bone-hard pitches which helped hone their skills. When Blatter said that the gerontocracy of the world game should not seek to dictate its traditions he was advancing an argument which may be used in both directions.

The softening-up process has been under way for some time and the language is largely French.

Demanding a switch

UEFA president Michel Platini kicked things off within a few weeks of voting for Qatar by demanding a winter switch. Incidentally, Platini also demanded a Gulf-wide World Cup and that one is a certain non-starter.

To be fair, Platini is a misunderstood soul on many issues with which other people have run away – technology, additional assistant referees and financial fairplay being but three debates for another day. But not on this one, though his grasp of issues such as timeframe is questionable.

Platini's initial salvo over Qatar was followed up by FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke going public with a helpful suggestion that medical analysis could support a date switch.

Then, all of a sudden, Blatter jumped on the bandwagon. First he said the issue would go on the agenda in October, then he firmed that up to predicting that the ExCo would approve a switch.

This took CONCACAF, in particular, by surprise. The United States lost out to Qatar in the final round of voting for 2022. My understanding is that both CONCACAF president Jeff Webb and USSF leader Sunil Gulati are puzzled by Blatter's sudden haste.

They are perfectly prepared for an ExCo discussion and likely appointment of yet another task force to study the issue. However, they are not alone in believing that to take a decision and then study the reasons would be putting a Qatari cart before the camel, so to speak.

Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, in his role as chairman of the European Club Association, is similarly suspicious, though the Bayern Munich CEO has been shuffling sideways towards a date change for some time – and this may yet prompt a schism within the ECA.

Rummenigge has issued a polite but firm request for a football-wide consultation before FIFA reaches any decision. He says: "We would like to be involved in the decision-making process on a serious and high level because this is something which will impact on our business so we want a guarantee of involvement."

> "I don't understand why FIFA would like an early decision. There is more than enough time to take a very sensible and prudent decision in the interests of football"
> European clubs chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge

He, too, wonders about the sudden haste, saying: "I believe there is no hurry and I don't understand why FIFA would like an early decision at the next executive committee meeting in October because the 2022 World Cup is nine years away.

"That is more than enough to take a very sensible and prudent [decision] in the best interests of football so all stakeholders in the football family can be happy with a possible change in the season for Qatar...because it affects our business."

So, the questions to concern the FIFA ExCo are :

1: Is it necessary to switch at all?
The answer is either no because all the key sectors will be air-cooled and most matches can be played at night or yes for concern over the health of fans (who can afford Qatari prices).

2: Does that affect the Qataris?
Not one iota.

3: Does that compromise the original bidding contest?
No, because the summer date was only assumed and never entered in contractual writing.

4: How would switching affect the sporting calendar?

Switch...Platini is in favour

Platini's preference for January/February 2022 World Cup would cut across the Winter Olympics date. This may be one reason for FIFA's sudden haste – in order to stake a claim before the IOC launches its own 2022 bidding process. Otherwise, no.

5: How would it affect the football calendar?
Most of the world's nations run their seasons from spring to autumn, so western Europe is on its own on this one.

6: Who is for, who is against and who could not care less?
Platini is in favour, so are lower-division western European clubs who want to cash in on the TV and sponsor exposure granted by the mid-season absence of the Premier, Serie A, La Liga, Bundesliga competition. CONCACAF will be against any hasty decision because of American anger, and most of the FIFA ExCo will not care one way or the other – many of them will not be there by 2022, after all.

An intriguing sub-text is how Qatar feeds into the intentions of Blatter and Platini regarding the FIFA presidential election in 2015. This may be evident sooner rather than later. HS

Turks take a hiding

It's not been a good month for Turkish football. Istanbul's bid to host the Olympic Games in 2020 failed amid concerns which included the negative fall-out from the long-running football match-fixing scandal, as well as endemic doping within Turkish athletics and the street protests prompted by redevelopment plans in the city centre.

On top of that, FIFA was upset by the poor attendances at the World Youth Cup in the country. That cannot have helped Turkey's cause after deciding – immediately after the Olympic snub – to bid for matches in the Euro 2020 finals.

Almost simultaneously, a European Under-21 qualifier against Sweden had to be interrupted for an hour after tear gas being deployed by police against street protesters nearby drifted into the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Stadium.

Just think: if it had not been for prime minister Tayyip Erdogan's Olympic ambitions – consider all those vast, big-money construction projects – Turkey would have been a shoo-in to stage the entirety of Euro 2020.

No go...downcast Turks hear of Olympic rejection

Sign of the times...Blatter (right) greets outgoing IOC president Jacques Rogge

Olympic corridors better for Blatter

Thomas Bach, the new president of the International Olympic Committee, denied, in the wake of his election, reports that he had been handed decisive support by Kuwaiti Sheikh Ahmed Al Sabah, the man who played a key role in Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa's successful accession to the Asian football presidency earlier this year.

Sepp Blatter, one of the elite 100-plus IOC members, was in Buenos Aires for the recent congress and doubtless voted for Bach. Both men, coincidentally, had been early-career proteges of Horst Dassler, the scion of the Adidas empire who played a key role in creating the sports finance explosion.

FIFA has taken a caning in the Olympic corridors in recent years over its various scandals – somewhat oddly considering that ISL beneficiaries such as Joao Havelange and Issa Hayatou have both been IOC members. Havelange quit last year ahead of the ISL report's publication but CAF president Hayatou is still in place.

Hence Blatter probably took particular relish in being able to contribute to a debate on women in sport by telling his colleagues about three female members of the executive committee: Lydia Nsekera, Moya Dodd and Sonia Bien-Aime. Few sports can say the same.

The ExCo is not the only FIFA sector coming within the ambit of girl power. Long-serving Delia Fischer has stepped up as new head of media.

Facetoface
FRANCK RIBERY

"My critics can attack me if they want. It makes no difference to me"

After playing a key role in Bayern Munich's treble success last season, the French winger has won UEFA's Best Player in Europe award for 2012-13

How does it feel to be voted the best player in Europe? Were you surprised?
It's a title I've dreamt of for a long time and which I've often thought about. I've been playing at a high level for two years and last season especially I played very, very well and won some big trophies. Why shouldn't it happen? If, like me, you come from nowhere, from a difficult quarter of Boulogne, a little town which hardly anyone knows; if you start out as a young boy playing on hard-surface pitches against kids who are much bigger than you; and if you follow an untypical career path, with many setbacks, it's unbelievable to end up in the final vote for the best player in Europe. But, at the same time, I've never once let up. I'm proud of what I've achieved up to now.

Have you always felt that it's been more difficult for you than it has for other players?
There are always setbacks. It's been that way since my childhood. It was often very difficult. But with my will and commitment, I've always managed to turn the page. I've never given up. And with this attitude, you always get somewhere in the end. Even now, at the age of 30, I still want to win every game. I haven't changed. Basically, I'm still the same Franck Ribery who once dreamt of big football occasions in Boulogne.

So this determination to battle on and fight back after suffering disappointment has been present in you from an early age?
Yes, but experience and all the different situations I've gone through have played a part in this too. In the meantime, people have come to understand that whatever happens, I can't be knocked down. What are really important to me are the relationships I have here in Munich. The club are satisfied with me, the fans like me. I get on really well with my team-mates. My family is happy. That's what counts above everything.

To whom do you owe your attitude?
My father helped me a lot. He always stood behind me. That said, with my determination, I think I would still have made it on my own. I grew up on the street. I worked on earning the respect of others all on my own. That was the only way to do it. But what was important was the support of my dad in the background. He had a strong character and would not let things get the better of him. He had to work hard all his life. Even when it was sometimes difficult, he made sure we never lacked anything. We always had enough to eat. He taught me that children are the most important thing and that has done me good. I'm very happy all has turned out well.

Do you feel you have taken revenge on those who have severely criticised you in the past?
Listen, I'm a father. I'm 30 years old. For me, these things aren't important. Naturally, I'm proud to have got so far. I'm pleased, but it has nothing to do with feelings of revenge. Absolutely not. My critics can attack me if they want. It makes no difference to me.

The improvement in your game was considerable last season...
Yes, I became even better in lots of small ways. Obviously, I'm now very experienced and this continues to help me. Jupp Heynckes wanted us to be more organised, that we all track back to do our share of defensive work, which meant that when we won the ball, I had a lot of room in front of me to work in.

How big was the contribution of the then-Bayern coach Heynckes to your great season?
Very big. He played an enormous part in our success. With him, I felt good, enjoying myself both in training and matches.

Why is that so important?
The relationship with the coach is simply vital for me. Contact with him and the players gave me all the love of life and warmth I needed to be good. Only details, but for me, very important.

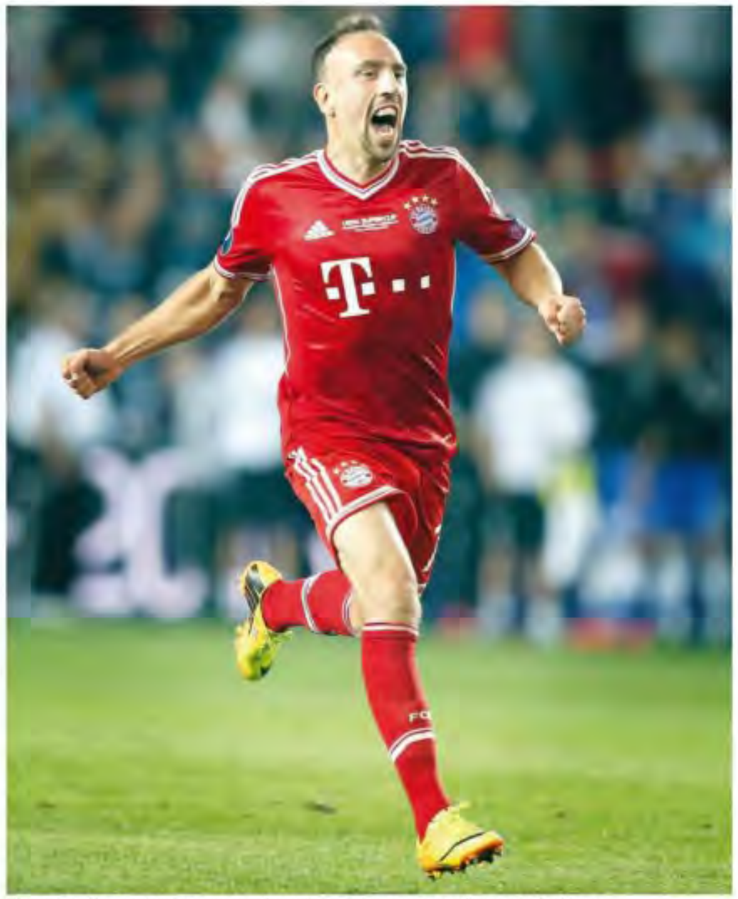
Have the titles of last season motivated you even more?
I've started the new season with an amazing desire. We've a new coach and I'm very pleased to have established a good relationship with Pep Guardiola. This is very important for me. I've had lots of chats with him. I've got to know him and he's discovered me. I made it clear to him that I don't always need extensive conversations. Little things are more important to me: a hello, a slap on the back, an observation, some praise. It makes me confident and only when I have that can I give my best.

Do you need to feel wanted by a coach when you are playing for him?
I don't need to feel important, but what I do need is a relationship. I want to have proper communication, have fun and laugh. There has to be an absolute bond of mutual trust. I must have the feeling that I can count on him, and in turn I want to show him that he can rely on me. If this is the case, I'm ready to go.

Beneath the hard shell, do you have a soft side?
I am sensitive, I admit it. I want to win, of course, but above all, I have a big heart. I always want to give. I always want others to profit from my good fortune. I'm thinking of those who are down on their luck, who don't have my family or friends. I get pleasure from helping out. It's better to give than receive. That's how I am on the pitch. I prefer to make goals than score them. When I set up a team-mate for a goal and see him celebrate, I'm unbelievably happy. Maybe that's a fault because perhaps one should always look to score oneself. But ▸

On where he'll keep his new trophy...

"I've a room at home where I display all my medals and cups. It gives me pleasure to go in there and see everything I've experienced. I'll have to find a special spot for such a trophy. It will take pride of place, of course"


Triumphant...Ribery celebrates Bayern Munich's UEFA Super Cup success against Chelsea in Prague

there is nothing that I can do about it. That is my game.

What of this season's Bayern squad?
It's a good group. There's a wonderful atmosphere. We are very motivated to have another great season.

Mario Gomez and Luiz Gustavo have moved on because they wanted to play more. In the run-up to a World Cup, is it stressful for national-team players to have to sit on the bench?
No. I think we players are intelligent enough. Why should we do things differently when it's going so well? Naturally, it's not easy for the coach. Every week he has to decide who makes the starting XI. We have to do our best to all stand as one, to make sure that everyone feels part of the team and has fun.

What is more important: playing great football or winning trophies?
The game in itself is important. If you win and don't enjoy it, it's not good. Basically fans have to go home after our games with a smile on their faces. I think our coach has the same view. There should be no doubt about it.

Fans seem to enjoy the way that you play...
It's good to know that I make it fun for others. It gives me even more desire. I want people to be thrilled watching me. You can't play football forever. My hope is for people to remember me later on. I want to leave my mark.

Have you noticed that your opponents treat you with more respect these days?
Sure, I feel respected, but I also respect every one of my opponents. Sometimes I notice that they are a little nervous and naturally I look to take advantage of it.

And their rough methods of stopping you...
That's become a little less frequent. But I do understand that opponents will try to use all possible means to win a game. Many are really motivated when facing me and want to show it to the world. That's part of the game.

Sometimes you can get carried away, too. Why do you think that is?
Look, I'm not a nasty piece of work. In these instances, I'm not pleased with myself as I don't really want to harm anyone. But sometimes so many things are going on that I can hardly control myself. I try to defend myself, but I don't intend to be vicious. It's only a form of protection. Actually I'm harmless. I want to have fun, but sometimes the fouls and the provocation are too much. I'm an impulsive sort and I can react. The way I am has played a big part in my career. I will not put up with any sort of ill treatment, but naturally I try to stay within certain boundaries.

Interview by Mounir Zitouni /ESM

Celebration...Ribery joins the Bayern fans in the Eden Arena after the penalty shoot-out victory over Chelsea

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Thomas Harper from Victoria, London where I'm based. Im a ex footballer who is now a Football Coach, Manager and Scout to a top professional London club. I also have links to other professional clubs as well as Actual Soccer Academy in Harrow Road London which helps coach and develop elite talent. Im also a qualified Personal Trainer and Nutritionist which bodes well with football and becoming the best athlete possible. I also work for St Andrews Youth Club which is the oldest in the world managing a under 15s football side as well as doing youth work. Work in a local primary school after school club coaching and teaching football. Work in a newly built local football pitch coaching and supervising football sessions to people all ages for as young as 7 all the way up to adults.

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Shock...Honduras' Maynor Figueroa (right) gets the better of Oribe Peralta as Mexico are beaten at home in the World Cup

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Brazil bound...Italy's Giorgio Chiellini (left) and Leonardo Bonucci celebrate

AFGHANISTAN

International return

Playing their first senior international on home soil for a decade, Afghanistan beat Pakistan 3-0 in front of a 6,000-capacity crowd at Kabul's AFF Stadium.

Sanjar Ahmadi, Harash Atefi and Marouf Mahmoudi were on target for the hosts in what was billed as a "friendship match" between two neighbours who had not played each other in the Afghan capital for 36 years. A return game is scheduled for December in Lahore.

The national team also won their first international trophy, beating India 2-0 in the Final of the South Asian Football Federation Championship. Goals from Mustafa Azadzoi and Sanjar Ahmadi avenged Afghanistan's 4-0 loss to the same opponents in the Final two years ago.

11 consecutive World Cup finals Argentina have now reached after clinching their place at Brazil 2014

Champions...Afghanistan

AUSTRALIA

Heavy defeat

The Socceroos suffered their heaviest defeat for 15 years when they lost 6-0 in a friendly to Brazil.

EL SALVADOR

Match-fixing probe

Twenty-two players, including 20 internationals, were suspended pending an investigation into match fixing. Those banned include Dennis Alas, Maryin Gonzalez, Alfredo Pacheco, Eliseo Quintanilla, Osael Romero and Ramon Sanchez, who all have over 50 caps.

Suspended...Sanchez

EGYPT

Aboutrika's ton

Mohamed Aboutrika became the ninth Egyptian player to win 100 caps when he appeared in the 4-2 win against Guinea. The 34-year-old scored a second-half penalty.

ENGLAND

Opposite ends

Everton's Ross Barkley won his first cap in a 4-0 victory over Moldova. Four days later, Chelsea's Frank Lampard collected his 100th – the eighth Englishman to do so – against Ukraine.

Achievement...Lampard

FRANCE

Barren spell over

Les Bleus finally ended an unwanted national record when Franck Ribery scored against Belarus – France's first goal in 526 minutes. Having failed to score in their previous five games, France went on to win 4-2.

Internationals

2014 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

EUROPE SECTION

● 13 finals places available

Group A

Sep 6 - Skopje
Macedonia 2 (Trickovski 20, Trajkovski 60)
Wales 1 (Ramsey pen 39)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Kenin (Swi)
Macedonia: Pacovski - Georgievski (Lazevski 77), Noveski, Sikov, Trickovski, Pandev, Ristovski, Gligorov, Kostovski (Mojsov 88), Ibraimi (Trajkovski 61), Tasevski.
Wales: Myhill - Gunter, B Davies, Ledley, Ricketts, A Williams, Vaughan (Nyhes 85), Ramsey, Collison (Matthews 79), J Williams (Crofts 62), Bellamy.

Sep 6 - Glasgow
Scotland 0
Belgium 2 (Defour 38, Mirallas 88)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,284. **Ref:** Tagliavento (Ita)
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, Martin, Hanley, Whittaker, Forrest (McCormack 86), Brown, Mulgrew, Snodgrass (Anya 58), Maloney, Griffiths (Rhodes 68).
Belgium: Courtois - Alderweireld, Van Buyten, Lombaerts (Pocognoli 77), Vertonghen, Witsel, De Bruyne, Chadli, Fellaini (Mirallas 68), Defour (Dembele 87), Berbatov.

Sep 6 - Belgrade
Serbia 1 (Milivojevic 66)
Croatia 1 (Manolev 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Serbia: Stojkovic - Ivanovic, Subotic, Nastasic, Kolarov, Fejsa, Matic, Markovic (Petrovic 78), Djurdjic (Tadic 57), Z Tosic (Sulejmani 57), Mitrovic. *Sent off: Matic 75min.*
Croatia: Pudigosa - Sirok, Simunic, Corluka, Lovren, Vukojevic, Modric, Rakitic (Jelavic 77), Olic (Perisic 57), Eduardo (Kovacic 83), Mandzukic. *Sent off: Simunic 90min.*

Sep 10 - Skopje
Macedonia 1 (Kostovski 84)
Scotland 2 (Anya 60, Maloney 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Fautrel (Fra)
Macedonia: Pacovski - Georgievski, Noveski, Sikov, Trickovski, Sabanski (Tasevski 42), Jahovic (Kostovski 63), Pandev, Trajkovski (Nikovski 57), Ristovski, Stojanovic.
Scotland: Marshall (Gilks 46) - Hutton, Martin, Hanley, Whittaker (Wallace 80), Mulgrew, Brown, Anya, Maloney, Naismith, Berman (McArthur 78).

Sep 10 - Cardiff
Wales 0
Serbia 3 (Djordjevic 8, Kolarov 39, Markovic 55)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Marciniak (Pol)
Wales: Myhill - Gabbidon, Gunter, Matthews, B Davies, King (Bale 58), Ledley (Robson-Kanu 75), Crofts (Vaughan 58), Ramsey, Bellamy, Vokes.
Serbia: Stojkovic - Ivanovic, Nastasic, Basacic, Kolarov, Fejsa (Petrovic 90), Radosavovic (Milivojevic 67), Markovic, Djuricic, Tadic (Krsticic 88), Djordjevic.

WC QUALS - EUROPE - GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belgium	5	7	1	0	16	2	22
Croatia	5	5	2	1	11	5	17
Serbia	5	5	2	4	13	10	11
Scotland	5	2	2	5	6	12	8
Macedonia	5	2	1	5	6	10	7
Wales	5	2	0	6	7	19	6

Remaining games
Oct 11: Croatia v Belgium; Wales v Macedonia.
Oct 15: Belgium v Wales; Scotland v Croatia; Serbia v Macedonia.

Group B

Sep 6 - Prague
Czech Republic 1 (Rosicky 70)
Armenia 2 (Mkhitharyan 31, Ghazaryan 90+2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 17,628. **Ref:** Gautier (Fra)
Czech Republic: Cech - Gebre Selassie, Sivok, M Kadlec, Limbersky (Suchy 64), Rosicky, Hubschman, Plasil, Jiracek (Vacek 62), Rabasic (V Kadlec 55), Kozak.
Armenia: Berezovsky (Kasparov 69) - Mkrtyan, Harsyan, Arzumanyan, Hovhannisyan (Pizzelli 77), Mkhitharyan, Artur Edgaryan, Ozbiliz (Hayrapetyan 28), Mkrtchyan, Ghazaryan, Movsisyan.

Sep 6 - Palermo
Italy 1 (Silandino 38)
Bulgaria 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 28,662. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo (Spa)
Italy: Buffon - Abate (Maggio 80), Bonucci, Chiellini, Antonelli (Astori 62), De Rossi, Pirlo, Thiago Motta, Candreva, Insigne (Giaccherini 64), Silandino.
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - Y Milev, Bodurov, I Ivanov, V Minev, Dyakov (Delev 75), Manolev (G Iliev 54), I Petrov, Gadzhev, Nedelev, Tonev (Rangelov 61).

Sep 6 - Valletta
Malta 1 (Fallia 38)
Denmark 2 (Andreasen 2, Camilleri og 52)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 5,576. **Ref:** Skiridopoulos (Gre)
Malta: Hecer - Failla, Camilleri, A Agius, Briffa, R Muscat, Scifoerras, Mintoff (R Fenech 75), Scicluna, Herrera (Zerafa 88), M Mifsud (Vella 80).
Denmark: Andersen - Andreasen (Smith 72), Kjaer, Agger, Boilesen, Jacobsen, Kvist, Eriksen, Braithwaite (Fischer 83), Pedersen, Fait (Krohn-Dehli 46).

Sep 10 - Yerevan
Armenia 0
Denmark 1 (Agger pen 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Net)
Armenia: Kasparov - Hovhannisyan, Mkrtyan, Harsyan, Hayrapetyan, Ozbiliz, Mkrtchyan (Sarkisov 27, Adamyan 46), Artur Edgaryan, Ghazaryan, Mkhitaryan, Pizzelli (Manoyan 70). *Sent off: Harsyan 75min.*
Denmark: Andersen - Zimling (Sloth 45+2), Bjelland, Agger, Boilesen, Kvist, Eriksen, Ankersen, Braithwaite (Fischer 66), Nielsen (Mathiesen 83), Krohn-Dehli.

Sep 10 - Turin
Italy 2 (Chiellini 52, Rabiotti pen 54)
Czech Republic 1 (Kozak 19)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 35,299. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Italy: Buffon - Bonucci, De Rossi, Chiellini, Maggio, Pirlo, Montolivo (Thiago Motta 86), Pasqual (Ogbonna 78), Candreva, Giaccherini (Osvaldo 46), Balotelli.
Czech Republic: Cech - Gebre Selassie (Rabasic 78), Sivok, Suchy, Limbersky, Prochazka, Plasil, Jiracek, Rosicky (Kolar 38), Darida (Vacek 56), Kozak. *Sent off: Kolar 88min.*

Sep 10 - Valletta
Malta 1 (Herrera 78)
Bulgaria 2 (Dimitrov 9, Sargorov 60)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,844. **Ref:** Tudor (Rom)
Malta: Hecer - Camilleri (J Caruana 82), A Agius, Dimech, A Muscat, Scifoerras, R Muscat, Herrera, Scicluna, Failla (R Fenech 66), M Mifsud (Vella 76).
Bulgaria: Mihaylov - Dimitrov, Bodurov, I Ivanov, V Minev, Dyakov, Gadzhev, I Popov, G Milanov (Zlatinski 81), Gargorov (Rangelov 61), Nedelev (Delev 66).

WC QUALS: EUROPE - GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ITALY (F)	5	5	2	0	15	5	20
Bulgaria	5	3	4	1	13	6	13
Denmark	5	3	3	2	9	10	12
Czech Rep	5	2	3	3	8	8	9
Armenia	5	3	0	5	6	10	9
Malta	5	1	0	7	4	18	3

Remaining games
Oct 11: Armenia v Bulgaria; Denmark v Italy; Malta v Czech Republic.
Oct 15: Bulgaria v Czech Republic; Denmark v Malta; Italy v Armenia.

Group C

Sep 6 - Minsk
Germany 3 (Klose 33, Kroos 51, T Muller 88)
Austria 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Germany: Neuer - Lahm, Mertesacker, Boateng, Schmelzer (Howedes 46), Khedira, Kroos, T Muller, Ozil, Reus (Draxler 90+2), Klose (S Bender 82).
Austria: Almer - Garics (Klein 78), Dragovic, Pogatetz, Fuchs, Kavlak, Alaba, Arnautovic (Sabitzer 67), Ivanschitz (Burgstaller 67), Weimann, Harnik.

Sep 6 - Astana
Kazakhstan 2 (Nurdauletov pen 50, Finonchenko 63)
Faroe Islands 1 (Benjaminsen 23)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,500. **Ref:** Casanova (SMR)
Kazakhstan: Sidelnikov - Logvinenko, Kislitsyn (Ostapenko 85), Nurdauletov, Dmitrenko, Korobkin (Finonchenko 46), Zhumaskaliyev (Khairullin 90+2), Shomko, Bogdanov, Khizhnichenko, Shcherbakov.
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Naes, V Davidsen, Baldvinsson, J Davidsen, Olsen, Benjaminsen, Hansson (Mikkalsen 81), Holst, Edmundsson (Klettskard 88), Mouritsen.

Sep 6 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 1 (Keane 22)
Sweden 2 (Elmander 33, A Svensson 57)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Skomina (Slo)
Rep Ireland: Forde - Coleman, Doane, O'Shea, Wilson, Walters (Cox 68), McCarthy, Whelan, McClean (Pilkington 74), Keane, Long.
Sweden: Isaksson - Lustig (A Johansson 65), P Nilsson, Antonsson, M Olsson, S Larsson, Ekdal, A Svensson (Wernbloem 68), Kacaniklic, Ibrahimovic, Elmander (J Olsson 90+2).

Sep 10 - Vienna
Austria 1 (Alaba 84)
Republic of Ireland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 48,500. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Austria: Almer - Garics, Dragovic, Fuchs, Alaba, Weimann (Janko 73), Harnik, Baumgartlinger, Prodl, Burgstaller (Arnautovic 60), Kavlak (Leitgeb 46).
Rep Ireland: Forde - Coleman, Doane, O'Shea (Clark 48), Wilson, Walters, Green, McCarthy, Pilkington (McClean 73), Long (Sammon 81), Keane.

Sep 10 - Tórshavn
Faroe Islands 0
Germany 3 (Mertesacker 22, Ozil pen 74, T Muller 84)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,818. **Ref:** Mazeika (Lit)
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - J Davidsen, Baldvinsson, Gregersen, V Davidsen, Olsen (Mouritsen 65), Benjaminsen, S Olsen, Justinussen, Holst (Hansson 76), Edmundsson (Klettskard 66). *Sent off: Gregersen 73min.*
Germany: Neuer - Lahm, Mertesacker, Boateng, Schmelzer, Khedira, Kroos, T Muller (Sam 84), Ozil, Draxler (Schurrle 75), Klose (Kruse 79).

Sep 10 - Astana
Kazakhstan 0
Sweden 1 (Ibrahimovic 1)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Zelinka (CzR)
Kazakhstan: Sidelnikov - Gorman, Kislitsyn, Nurdauletov, Dmitrenko, Baizhanov (Khairullin 77), Finonchenko, Shomko, Bogdanov, Khizhnichenko (Shcherbakov 90+2), Korobkin.
Sweden: Isaksson - P Nilsson, M Olsson, Ekdal, S Larsson (Durmaz 70), A Svensson (Kallstrom 87), Antonsson, A Johansson, Kacaniklic, Ibrahimovic, Elmander (Hysen 81).

WC QUALS: EUROPE - GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	6	7	1	0	26	7	22
Sweden	6	5	2	1	14	8	17
Austria	6	4	2	2	16	6	14
Rep Ireland	6	3	2	3	13	13	11
Kazakhstan	6	1	1	4	4	17	4
Faroe Islands	6	0	0	6	3	26	0

Remaining games
Oct 11: Faroe Islands v Kazakhstan; Germany v Republic of Ireland; Sweden v Austria.
Oct 15: Faroe Islands v Austria; Republic of Ireland v Kazakhstan; Sweden v Germany.

Group D

Sep 6 - Tallinn
Estonia 2 (Vassiljev 18, 57)
Holland 2 (Robben 2, Van Persie pen 90+2)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,210. **Ref:** Boiko (Ukr)
Estonia: Pareiko - Kruglov, Klavan, Piiroja, Jaager, Lindpere (Kams 85), Vunk, Omeljanov, Ojamaa (Reintam 90+3), Vassiljev, Anier (Zenjov 56). *Sent off: Piiroja 90+ 1min.*
Holland: Verm - Janmaat, De Vrij, Bruma 67), Martins Indi, Willems (De Guzman 75), Strootman, Sneijder, Schaars, Robben, Van Persie, Lens (Kuyt 67).

Sep 6 - Bucharest
Romania 3 (Marica 2, Pintilii 31, Tarasa 88)
Hungary 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 41,405. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Matel, Golan, Chiriches, Rat, Pintilii, Bourceanu, Torje (Tarasa 58), Maxim (Popa 64), Stancu, Marica (Hoban 79).
Hungary: Bogdan - Vanczak, Lipták, Guzmics, Kadar, Koman (Szabics 85), Korosmar (Hajnal 34), Varga (Lovencsics 68), Dzsudzsak, Bode, Szalai.

Sep 6 - Kayseri
Turkey 5 (Umut 35, 39, 69, Burak 63, Arda 90+3)
Andorra 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 21,923. **Ref:** Binderis (Lux)
Turkey: Volkan - Gokhan Gonul, Semih, Omer, Caner, Mehmet Topal, Sabin (Olcay 66), Gokhan Inler (Calhanoglu 82), Arda, Umut, Burak (Alper 78).
Andorra: Pol - C Martinez, Vales, E Garcia, I Lima, Pujol, San Nicolas, Ayala (Peppe 80), Lorenzo (Vieira 62), Gomez (Riera 60), M Garcia.

Sep 10 - Andorra La Vella
Andorra 0
Holland 2 (Van Persie 50, 54)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 550. **Ref:** Vucemilovic (Cro)
Andorra: Pol - San Nicolas, E Garcia, I Lima, M Garcia, C Martinez, Vieira, Pujol (Ayala 85), Vales, Lorenzo (Moreno 59), Riera (Moreira 72).
Holland: Verm - Janmaat, De Vrij, Vlaar, Willems (Maher 46), Strootman, Sneijder (Kuyt 78), Schaars, Schaken, Van Persie, Lens.

Sep 10 - Budapest
Hungary 5 (Klavan og 11, Hajnal 21, Bode 41, Nemeth 69, Dzsudzsak 85)
Estonia 1 (Kink 47)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Kulbakov (Bls)
Hungary: Bogdan - Vanczak, Guzmics, Kadar, Laczko (Dinnyes 61), Koman, Elek (Gyomber 76), Hajnal, Dzsudzsak, Bode, Nemeth (Szakaly 86).
Estonia: Pareiko - Jaager, Reintam, Klavan, Teniste, Puljo (Ojamaa 46), Vunk, Mosnikov, Kink (Kams 76), Anier, Ahjasaia (Zenjov 46).

Sep 10 - Bucharest
Romania 0
Turkey 2 (Burak 22, Erdinc 90+5)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 44,537. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Romania: Tatarusanu - Matel, Rat, Chiriches, Pintilii, Marica (Maxim 46), Tarasa (Bucur 78), Torje (Popa 46), Golan, Hoban, Stancu.
Turkey: Volkan - Gokhan Gonul, Semih, Omer, Caner, Mehmet Topal, Selcuk Inan, Gokhan Inler (Erdinc 84), Arda, Umut (Enes 90), Burak (Olcay 72).

WC QUALS: EUROPE - GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HOLLAND (F)	6	7	1	0	24	4	22
Hungary	6	4	2	2	18	12	14
Turkey	6	4	1	3	14	7	13
Romania	6	4	1	3	13	12	13
Estonia	6	2	1	5	8	18	7
Andorra	6	0	0	6	0	24	0

Remaining games
Oct 11: Andorra v Romania; Estonia v Turkey; Holland v Hungary.
Oct 15: Hungary v Andorra; Romania v Estonia; Turkey v Holland.

Group E

Sep 6 - Oslo
Norway 2 (Elyounoussi 43, King 86)
Cyprus 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 11,296. **Ref:** Hansen (Den)
Norway: Jaestein - Ruud, Bjordal, Hangeland, Hogli, Strasten (Soderlund 81), Johansen (Jenssen 75), Bashi, Ekrem, Elyounoussi (King 64), Abeinouw.
Cyprus: Georgallides - Theofilou, Merkis, Dossa Junior, Alexandrou, Nikolaou (Sotiriou 53), Dobrasinovic (Artymatas 73), Charalambides (Demetriou 54), Laban, Aloneftis, Mitidis.

Sep 6 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Kampl 19)
Albania 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,843. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Brecko, Ilic, Kelhar, Jokic, Krhin, Kurtic, Birsa (Mertelj 74), Kirm, Kampl (Ljubijankic 90+1), Novakovic (Malawa 83).
Albania: Berisha - Lila, Teli, Cana, Agolli, E Bulku (Salihi 53), Cani (Memedi 72), M Basha (Abrashi 86), Kace, Rama, Roshi.

Sep 6 - Berne
Switzerland 4 (Lichtsteiner 15, 30, Schar 27, Dzemaili pen 54)
Iceland 4 (J B Gudmundsson 3, 68, 90+1, Sigthorsson 58)
HT: 3-1. **Att:** 26,000. **Ref:** Karasev (Rus)
Switzerland: Benaglio - Lichtsteiner, Schar, Von Bergen, Rodriguez, Shaqiri (Kiesa 89), Dzemaili, Behrami, Stocker (Barnetta 79), Khaka (Drmic 76), Seferovic.
Iceland: Halldorsson - B Saevarsson (O I Skulason 62), Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A F Skulason, A E Gunnarsson, Danielsson (Gudjohnsen 46), G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason, Sigthorsson, J B Gudmundsson.

Sep 10 - Nicosia
Cyprus 0
Slovenia 2 (Novakovic 13, Ilicic 80)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 700. **Ref:** Buquet (Fra)
Cyprus: Georgallides - Dossa Junior, E Charalambous, Markis, Theofilou (Demetriou 46), Eleftheriou (Charalambides 33), Alexandrou, Makridis, Sotiriou, Laban, Dobrasinovic (Nikolaou 68).
Slovenia: S Handanovic - Brecko, Cesar, Ilic, Birsa (Ilicic 59), Novakovic (Filipovic 90+3), Struna, Kirm, Kampl, Mertelj, Ljubijankic (Malawa 89).

Sep 10 - Reykjavik
Iceland 2 (B Bjarnason 14, Sigthorsson 47)
Albania 1 (Rama 8)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 9,768. **Ref:** Marriner (Eng)
Iceland: Halldorsson - B Saevarsson (Jonasson 90), R Sigurdsson, J B Gudmundsson, B Bjarnason, Sigthorsson, G Sigurdsson, Arnason, A E Gunnarsson, Gudjohnsen (O I Skulason 78), A F Skulason.
Albania: Berisha - Lila, Teli, Dallku (Ejaslim 62), Cana, Kace, Cani (E Bulku 64), M Basha (Januzi 64), Salihi, Rama, Roshi.

Sep 10 - Oslo
Norway 0
Switzerland 2 (Schar 12, 51)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 16,631. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Norway: Jaestein - Ruud, Bjordal, Hangeland, Hogli (Elabdellaoui 70), Braaten, Johansen, Nordtveit, Ekrem (Jenssen 64), Elyounoussi, Pedersen (King 22).
Switzerland: Benaglio - Lichtsteiner, Schar, Von Bergen, Rodriguez, Behrami, Inler, Shaqiri (Dzemaili 90), Khaka (Senderos 90+3), Stocker (Fernandes 74), Seferovic.

WC QUALS: EUROPE - GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	6	5	3	0	14	5	18
Iceland	6	4	1	3	14	14	13
Slovenia	6	4	0	4	11	10	12
Norway	6	3	2	3	8	9	11
Albania	6	3	1	4	8	8	10
Cyprus	6	1	1	5	4	13	4

Remaining games
Oct 11: Albania v Switzerland; Iceland v Cyprus; Slovenia v Norway.
Oct 15: Cyprus v Albania; Norway v Iceland; Switzerland v Slovenia.

Group F

Sep 6 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 2 (McAuley 38, Ward 52)
Portugal 4 (Bruno Alves 20, Cristiano Ronaldo 60, 77, 83)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 13,629. **Ref:** Makkelie (Hol)
Northern Ireland: Carroll - Hodson, Ferguson (Baire 76), McAuley, J Evans, McGinn (K Lafferty 67), Davis, Paterson, Brunt, Norwood, Ward (C Evans 71). *Sent off: Brunt 61min, K Lafferty 78min.*
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Pereira, Pepe, Bruno Alves, Fabio Coentrao, Miguel Veloso, Raul Meireles (Nani 56), Joao Moutinho, Vieirinha (Nelson Oliveira 85), Helder Postiga, Cristiano Ronaldo (Ruben Amorim 89). *Sent off: Helder Postiga 43min.*

Sep 6 - Kazan
Russia 4 (Kokorin 1, 35, Kerzhakov 61, Samedov 90+2)
Luxembourg 1 (Joachim 90)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 18,525. **Ref:** Madden (Sco)
Russia: Akinfeev - Granat, Kozlov, Ignashevich, Kombarov, Denisov, Bystrov (Samedov 65), Shirokov (Ryazantsev 82), Falzolin, Kerzhakov, Kokorin (Ionov 46).
Luxembourg: Joubert - Jänisch, Gerson (Peters 66), Philipps, Laterza, Payal, Turpel (Bastos 60), Jans, Joachim, Da Mota, Bensi (Luisi 77).

Sep 7 - Tel Aviv
Israel 1 (Shechter 73)
Azerbaijan 1 (Amirguliyev 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 21,250. **Ref:** Johannesson (Swe)
Israel: Aouate - Davidadza, Ben Haim, Tibi, Melikson, Alberman (Radi 72), Ezra (Refaelov 62), Yeini, Natcho, Zahavi (Barda 62), Shechter.
Azerbaijan: K Agayev - Abishov (J Huseynov 78), R F Sadygov, Allahverdiyev, Shukurov, Ramaldanov (Leyla 71), Amirguliyev, Aliyev, Dadasov, Abdullayev (Garayev 46), Ozkara.

Sep 10 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 3 (Joachim 45+2, Bensi 76, Janisch 87)
Northern Ireland 2 (Paterson 14, McAuley 82)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,114. **Ref:** Malek (Pol)
Luxembourg: Joubert - Laterza, Jans, Philipps, Janisch, Mutsch, Gerson, Da Mota (Bukvic 89), Bensi, Turpel (Luisi 68), Joachim.
Northern Ireland: Carroll - Hodson, D Lafferty (Brigg 80), McAuley, J Evans, McGinn (O'Connor 35), Davis, Paterson, Ferguson (McKay 60), Norwood, Ward.

Sep 10 - St Petersburg
Russia 3 (V Berezutsky 49, Kokorin 52, Gazinskov 74)
Israel 1 (Zahavi 90+3)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 21,000. **Ref:** Grafe (Ger)
Russia: Akinfeev - Kozlov, V Berezutsky, Ignashevich, Kombarov, Samedov, Denisov (Gazinskov 46), Falzolin (Dzagoev 46), Kerzhakov, Shirokov, Kokorin (Bystrov 77).
Israel: Aouate - Kornan, Ben Haim, Davidadza, Alberman (Radi 71), Natcho, Melikson (Ezra 46), Yeini, Refaelov, Barda (Shechter 65), Zahavi.

WC QUALS: EUROPE - GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Russia	6	6	0	2	15	4	18
Portugal	6	5	2	1	16	8	17
Israel	6	3	3	2	17	12	12
N Ireland	6	1	3	4	8	14	6
Luxembourg	6	1	3	4	7	19	6
Azerbaijan	6	0	5	3	4	10	5

Remaining games
Oct 11: Azerbaijan v Northern Ireland; Luxembourg v Russia; Portugal v Israel.
Oct 15: Azerbaijan v Russia; Israel v Northern Ireland; Portugal v Luxembourg.

Group G

Sep 6 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
Slovakia 1 (Pecovsky 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,620. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Vrsajevic (Misic 65), Sikalicic, Spahic, Lulic, Medunjanin (Hajrovic 82), Pjanic, Misimovic (Stevanovic 78), Salihovic, Ibisevic, Dzeko.
Slovakia: Mucha - Pekarik, Skrtel, Durica, Hubocan, Pecovsky, Kucka, Sestak (Jendrisek 61), Hamsik (Guede 72), Weiss, Nemec (Jakubko 86).

Sep 6 - Riga
Latvia 2 (Bulvitis 20, Zjuzins 43)
Liechtenstein 1 (Malulavicius 44)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 7,306. **Ref:** Dallerlere (Blg)
Latvia: Vanins - Gabovs, Bulvitis, Gorkss, Maksimenko, Sheinkinzs, Laizans, Rugins (Lazdins 74), Zjuzins (Caunis 64), Sabala, Rudnevs (Rode 90+2).
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Quintans, Martin Stocklasa, Frick (A Christen 27), Oehri, Wieser (Yildiz 85), D Hasler, Polverino, N Hasler, Burgmeier, M Christen (Gubser 90). *Sent off: D Hasler 66min.*
Greece: Karnezis - Manolis, Sioulis, Kone (Nimis 46), Mitroglou, Torosidis, Christodoulopoulos (D Papadopoulos 84), Papastathopoulos, Holebas, Kaboranis, Tachtsidis (Karagounis 67). *Sent off: Holebas 58min.*

Sep 10 - Piraeus
Greece 1 (Salpigidis 58)
Latvia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 18,083. **Ref:** Jakobsson (Ice)
Greece: Karnezis - Manolis, Tzavellas (Karagounis 74), Sioulis, Torosidis, Papastathopoulos, Kaboranis, Nimis, Salpigidis (Christodoulopoulos 64), Samaras (Fetfatzidis 88), Mitroglou. *Sent off: Kaboranis 90+3min.*
Latvia: Kolinko - Gabovs, Bulvitis, Gorkss, Maksimenko, Lazdins (Sinnikovs 61), Laizans, Rugins, Zjuzins (Karasauskis 65), Caunis, Vaipatovskis (Rakels 79). *Sent off: Rugins 58min.*

Sep 10 - Marijampole
Lithuania 2 (Malulavicius 16, Kijanskas 40)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 2,700. **Ref:** Silagava (Geo)
Lithuania: Karcemarskas - Vicius, Andriuskevicius, Kijanskas, Mikutelis, D Cesnauskis, E Cesnauskis (Semas 79), Mahlevicius (Stripeikis 90), Mikolunas, Ivaskevicius, Kalonas (Kuklys 72).
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Burgmeier, Kaufmann, Oehri, Quintans, Martin Stocklasa, A Christen, Gubser (Erne 75), Polverino, Wieser, M Christen.

Hat-trick...Gudmundsson (no7)

ICELAND

Dramatic comeback

John Berg Gudmundsson scored a hat-trick, including a last-minute equaliser, as Iceland came from 4-1 down to draw 4-4 with Switzerland.

KENYA

CECAFA Cup hosts

This year's CECAFA Cup, which is scheduled to take place from November 24 to December 8, will be held in Kenya. The country last hosted the annual East and Central African tournament in 2009.

LUXEMBOURG

First win in 41 years

A 3-2 win against Northern Ireland gave Luxembourg only their third-ever victory in a World Cup qualifier, and their first at home since 1972.

Late winner...Janisch

Mathias Janisch grabbed a late winner at the Stade Josy Barthel after Aurelien Joachim and Stefano Bensi had scored earlier for the hosts. Martin Paterson and Gareth McAuley were on target for the visitors.

Paul Philipp, president of the Luxembourg Football Federation, said: "I can't stress enough how great this day is for football in this country."

MACEDONIA

Missing keeper

French referee Fredy Fautrel had to re-start the second half of Macedonia's World Cup qualifier with Scotland in Skopje after the game kicked off with the home side's goalkeeper, Tomislav Pacovski of Belgian side Mechelen, still in the dressing room.

Although Jovan Kostovski cancelled out Ikechi Anya's opening goal for the visitors, Shaun Maloney's free-kick gave Scotland victory.

NIGERIA

Age doubts

Coach Manu Garba will be without several key players at the Under-17 World Cup in October after wrist scans suggested they were over the age limit.

Opening goal...Anya

Garba's squad, which finished as runners-up at the 2013 African Under-17 Championship in Morocco, underwent tests in Abuja ahead of the upcoming tournament in the United Arab Emirates.

"We are working in conjunction with the Nigeria Football Federation to ensure that only eligible players will represent the country at the World Cup and we are on the right course," said Garba.

Nigeria have won the Under-17 World Cup three times – in 1985, 1993 and 2007 – but there have often been question marks surrounding the actual age of some of their players.

Sep 10 - Zilina
Slovakia 1 (Hamsik 42)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Bicakcic 68, Hajrovic 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,438. **Ref:** Fernandez Borbalan (Spa)
Slovakia: Mucha - Pekarik, Skrtel, Durica, Hubocan, Pecovsky, Kucka, Sestak (Jendrisek 62), Hamsik, Weiss (Mak 82), Nemec (Jakubko 82).
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Mujdza (Zahirovic 50), Bicakcic, Spahic, Kolinovic (Visca 69), Medunjanin, Pjanic, Misimovic (Hajrovic 76), Lulic, Ibisevic, Dzeko.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bosnia-Herz	8	6	1	1	25	5	19
Greece	8	6	1	1	9	4	19
Slovakia	8	3	3	2	9	7	12
Lithuania	8	2	2	4	7	10	8
Latvia	8	2	1	5	8	16	7
Liechtenstein	8	0	2	6	3	19	2

Remaining games
Oct 11 Bosnia-Herzegovina v Liechtenstein; Greece v Slovakia; Lithuania v Latvia.
Oct 15 Greece v Liechtenstein; Latvia v Slovakia; Lithuania v Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Group H
Sep 6 - London
England 4 (Gerrard 12, Lambert 26, Welbeck 45, 50)
Moldova 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 61,607. **Ref:** Kruzliak (Slk)
England: Hart - Walker, Cahill, Jagielka, A Cole (Baines 46), Gerrard, Walcott, Lampard, Wilshere (Barkley 58), Welbeck, Lambert (Milner 70).
Moldova: Namasco - Armas, Golovatenco, Epureanu, Bulgaru (Savorov 57), Bordian, Ionita (Onica 19), Antoniuc, Dedov, Gheorghiev (A Pascenko 84), Sidorenco.

Sep 6 - Warsaw
Poland 1 (Lewandowski 16)
Montenegro 1 (Damjanovic 11)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,652. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Poland: Boruc - Jedrzejczyk, Szukala, Glik, Wawrzyniak (Boenisch 27), Krychowiak, Klich, Blaszczykowski, Zielinski (Mierzejewski 75), Sobota (Wszolek 62), Lewandowski.
Montenegro: M Bozovic - Savic, Basa, Dzudovic, V Bozovic, Zverotic, Drincic, Krkotic (Nikcevic 46), Boskovic, Damjanovic (Beciraj 86), Vucinic (Kasalica 37).

Sep 6 - Lviv
Ukraine 5 (Devych 11, Seleznyov 26, Edmar 32, Khacheridi 45+1, 54, Konoplyanka 50, Bezus 63)
Fedetskyi 75, Rakitskyi 90+3)
San Marino 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 34,190. **Ref:** Doyle (Ire)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Khacheridi, Tymoshchuk (Bezus 60), Yaremchenko (Khomchenovskyi 75), Konoplyanka, Seleznyov, Shevchuk (Husiev 60), Fedetskyi, Rakitskyi, Edmar, Devych.
San Marino: F Valentini - C Valentini (Bollini 57), Palazzi, F Vitaioli, D Simoncini, Genghini, M Vitaioli, Coppini (Bacciocchi 69), Cervellini, Selva, A Gasperoni (Rinaldi 88).

Sep 10 - Serravalle
San Marino 1 (Alessandro Della Valle 22)
Poland 5 (Zielinski 10, 86, Blaszczykowski 23, Sobota 34, Mierzejewski 75)
HT: 1-3. **Att:** 1,587. **Ref:** Borg (Mlt)
San Marino: A Simoncini - Buscarini, F Vitaioli, Alessandro Della Valle, G Bellini, Palazzi (Cibelli 69), M Vitaioli, Calzolari, A Gasperoni (Cervellini 42), Rinaldi (Bianchi 80), Selva.
Poland: Boruc - Celeban, Jedrzejczyk, Salamon, Boenisch, Krychowiak (Wszolek 79), Blaszczykowski (Mierzejewski 72), Klich, Zielinski, Sobota, Pawel Brozek (Robak 55).

Sep 10 - Kiev
Ukraine 0
England 0
Att: 65,880. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Fedetskyi, Khacheridi, Kucher, Shevchuk, Shepelenko, Edmar, Husiev (Bezus 68), Yaremchenko (Khomchenovskyi 90), Konoplyanka, Zozulya (Seleznyov 90).
England: Hart - Walker, Cahill, Jagielka, A Cole, Lampard, Gerrard, Wilshere (Young 68), Walcott (Cleverley 88), Lambert, Milner.

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	8	4	4	0	25	3	16
Ukraine	8	4	3	1	19	4	15
Montenegro	8	4	3	1	15	8	15
Poland	8	3	4	1	18	9	13
Moldova	8	1	2	5	4	15	5
San Marino	8	0	0	8	1	43	0

Remaining games
Oct 11 England v Montenegro; Moldova v San Marino; Ukraine v Poland.
Oct 15 England v Poland; Montenegro v Moldova; San Marino v Ukraine.

Group I
Sep 6 - Helsinki
Finland 0
Spain 2 (Jordi Alba 19, Negredo 85)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 37,482. **Ref:** Bebek (Cro)
Finland: Maenpaa - Toivio, Pasanen, Moisander, Arkivuo, Hetsoo, Taimi (Riski 68), Ring (Hamalainen 68), R Eremenko, Schulin, Pukki (Zeneli 80).
Spain: Casillas - Koke, Albiol, Sergio Ramos, Jordi Alba, Xavi, Mario Suarez, Iniesta, Pedro (Cazorla 80), Villa (Jesus Navas 54), Fabregas (Negredo 70).

Sep 6 - Tbilisi
Georgia 0
France 0
Att: 26,360. **Ref:** Aydinus (Tur)
Georgia: Loria - Kashia, Khubutia, Kankava, Ananidze (Targamadze 69), Grigalava, Lobjanidze, Kobakhidze (E Grigalashvili 60), Amisulashvili, Okriashvili, Gelashvili (Dvalishvili 79).
France: Lloris - Sagna, Koscielny, Raffin, Evra, Sissoko, Valbuena, Gallaugui (Nasri 76), Ribery, Benzema (Giguac 62), Giroud.

Sep 10 - Gomel
Belarus 2 (Filipenko 32, Kalachev 57)
France 4 (Ribery pen 47, 64, Nasri 76, Pogba 73)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 12,203. **Ref:** Drsata (Ita)
Belarus: Veremko - Bordachev, Filipenko, Martynovich, Tigorev (Brassan 83), Putsilo, Kalachev, Dragun (Olekhnovich 71), Volkhovtsov (Rodionov 77), A Hleb, Balanovich.
France: Lloris - Sagna, Clichy, Koscielny, Abidal, Pogba, Matuidi, Valbuena (Gallaugui 80), Ribery (Sissoko 80), Payet (Nasri 61), Giroud.

Sep 10 - Tbilisi
Georgia 0
Finland 1 (R Eremenko pen 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Trattino (Cyp)
Georgia: Revishvili - Lobjanidze, Khubutia, Amisulashvili, Grigalava, Ananidze (Dvalishvili 83), Kashia, Kankava, Okriashvili, Gelashvili (E Grigalashvili 57), Kobakhidze (Targamadze 46).
Sent off: Kankava 75min.
Finland: Maenpaa - Lampi, Arkivuo, Moisander, J Ojala, Taimi, R Eremenko, P Halmaraj, Hamalainen (Riski 89), Ring (Sparv 71), Pukki (Schuller 90+2).

WC QUALS: EUROPE – GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	8	4	2	0	10	2	14
France	7	4	2	1	12	6	14
Finland	7	2	3	2	5	6	9
Georgia	7	1	2	4	3	8	5
Belarus	7	1	1	5	8	14	4

Remaining games
Oct 11 Spain v Belarus.
Oct 15 France v Finland; Spain v Georgia.

Each team plays 10 times (except Gp I, 8 times)

● The 8 group winners qualify for the finals
● The 8 runners-up with the best record[1] will be paired in a 2-leg play-offs (Nov 15 & Nov 19), the winners of which will also qualify for the finals
[1]*Determined by number of points gained in the games against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th in the respective groups*

SOUTH AMERICA SECTION

● 6.5 finals places available, one of which goes automatically to hosts Brazil

(single, round-robin group)

Sep 6 - Santiago
Chile 3 (Vargas 10, M Gonzalez 30, Vidal 85)
Venezuela 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 44,515. **Ref:** Ricci (Bra)
Chile: Bravo - M Gonzalez, Isla, Mena, Valdivia (Beausejour 73), Vidal, Diaz, Medel, Aranguiz (Pizarro 58), Sanchez, Vargas (Henriquez 84).
Venezuela: D Hernandez - Vizcarrondo, Rosales, Perozo, Cichero (A Gonzalez 44), Arango, C Gonzalez (Grozco 70), Lucena, Seijas (A Flores 79), S Rondon, Martinez.

Sep 6 - Barranquilla
Colombia 1 (Rodriguez 30)
Ecuador 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Lopes (Bra)
Colombia: Ospina - L Perea, Valdes, Aguilar (Cuadrado 46), Zuniga, Torres (Mejia 75), Sanchez, Armero, Rodriguez, Falcao, Gutierrez (J Martinez 82).
Ecuador: Bangueira - Achilier, Erazo, Castillo, Montes (Guagua 46), A Valencia, Noboa, W Ayovi, Paredes, E Valencia (Rojas 68), Montero (Ibarra 77). *Sent off:* Achilier 28min.

Sep 6 - Asuncion
Paraguay 4 (Fabbro 16, Santa Cruz 47, R Ortiz 80, Gomez 84)
Bolivia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Garnito (Per)
Paraguay: A Silva - Da Silva, Candia, Samudio, Gomez, Fabbro (Santadria 66), Piriloni (Aquino 71), Ayala, R Ortiz, Santa Cruz, A Romero (D Romero 65).
Bolivia: Galarza - Raldes, Rodriguez, Zenteno (Cardozo 46), L Gutierrez, Cabrera, Chavez (Maygua 68), Arze (Arce 46), Danny Bejarano, Martins, Arnaque.

Sep 6 - Lima
Peru 1 (Farfan 84)
Uruguay 2 (Suarez pen 43, 67)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 36,000. **Ref:** Loustau (Arg)
Peru: R Fernandez - Rodriguez, Ramos, Farfan, Cruzado, Ballon (Vargas 46), Ramirez (Hurtado 66), Yotun, Advincula (Herrera 85), Guerrero, Pizarro.
Sent off: Yotun 45+2min.
Uruguay: Muslera - M Pereira, Lugano, Godin, Caceres (Fucile 81), C Rodriguez, Gargano (A Gonzalez 70), Arevalo, Suarez, Forlan (Stuani 25), Cavani.

Sep 10 - La Paz
Bolivia 1 (Arrascaita 47)
Ecuador 1 (F Caicedo pen 58)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** De Oliveira (Bra)
Bolivia: Quinonez - Raldes, Zenteno, M Bejarano (Arrascaita 46), Chumacero (Maygua 74), Cardozo, Diego Bejarano, Arce, Cabrera, Velazaa, Azogue (Martins 46).
Ecuador: Dominguez - Guagua, Erazo, Castillo (Noboa 65), Saritama, A Valencia, W Ayovi, Paredes, J Ayovi (Ibarra 50), F Caicedo (J Guerron 73), Montero.

Sep 10 - Asuncion
Paraguay 2 (Jose Nunez 17, Santa Cruz 86)
Argentina 5 (Messi pen 12, pen 53, Aguero 32, Di Maria 50, Maxi Rodriguez 90)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Osses (Chi)
Paraguay: Fernandez - Da Silva, Candia, Caceres, Samudio, C Riveros, Fabbro (Rojas 55), Ayala, R Ortiz (Aquino 21; D Romero 46), Santa Cruz, Jose Nunez.
Argentina: Romero - Zabaleta, Campagnaro, Coloccini, Basanta, Gago (Maxi Rodriguez 67), Biglia, Di Maria, Aguero (Banega 77), Messi, Palacio (Lavezzi 65).

Sep 10 - Montevideo
Uruguay 2 (Cavani 77, Stuani 81)
Colombia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Arias (Par)
Uruguay: Muslera - Fucile, Scotti, M Pereira, Gimenez, C Rodriguez (Ramirez 71), A Gonzalez (Gargano 46), Arevalo, Lodeiro (Stuani 46), Suarez, Cavani.
Colombia: Ospina - Yepes, L Perea, Medina, Aguilar (A Ramirez 80), Zuniga, Sanchez (J Martinez 86), Guarin, Rodriguez, Falcao, Gutierrez (Cuadrado 68).

Sep 10 - Puerto La Cruz
Venezuela 3 (S Rondon 37, C Gonzalez pen 62, Otero 77)
Peru 2 (Hurtado 20, Zambrano 87)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 20,049. **Ref:** Pitana (Arg)
Venezuela: D Hernandez - Amorebieta, Vizcarrondo, Rosales, A Gonzalez, Arango (Aristeguieta 85), C Gonzalez (Otero 68), Grozco, Rincon, S Rondon, Martinez (Lucena 75).
Peru: R Fernandez - Rodriguez, Herrera (Advincula 14), Zambrano, Cruzado (Ramirez 63), Hurtado, Loriden, Retamoso, Vargas, Pizarro (Guerrero 84), Carrillo.

WC QUALS: SOUTH AMERICA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ARGENTINA (F)	14	8	5	1	30	11	29
Colombia	14	8	2	4	22	8	26
Chile	14	8	0	6	24	21	24
Ecuador	14	6	4	4	16	14	22
Uruguay	14	6	4	4	22	22	22
Venezuela	15	5	4	6	13	19	19
Peru	14	4	2	8	15	22	14
Bolivia	15	2	5	8	16	29	11
Paraguay	14	3	2	9	15	28	11

Remaining games
Oct 11 Argentina v Peru; Colombia v Chile; Ecuador v Uruguay; Venezuela v Paraguay.
Oct 15 Chile v Ecuador; Paraguay v Colombia; Peru v Bolivia; Uruguay v Argentina.

Each team plays 16 times

● The top 4 qualify for the finals
● The 5th-placed team will meet Jordan (the Asia section play-off winners) in a 2-leg play-off (Nov 15 & Nov 19) for a place in the finals

CONCACAF SECTION

● 3.5 finals places available

4th round

(single, round-robin group)

Sep 6 - San Jose
Costa Rica 3 (Acosta 2, Borges 9, Campbell 75)
United States 1 (Dempsey pen 43)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Rodriguez (Mex)
Costa Rica: Navas - Umana, G Gonzalez, Acosta, Oviedo, Gamboa, Borges, Tejeda (Cubero 73), Brenes (Brenes 88), Campbell, B Ruiz (Saborio 88).
United States: Howard - Orozco, Gonzalez, Besler, Beasley, Cameron, Jones, Zusi (E Johnson 55), Donovan, F Johnson (Altidore 71), Dempsey (Johannsson 90).

Sep 6 - Mexico City
Mexico 1 (Peralta 5)
Honduras 2 (Bengtson 63, Costly 66)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Moreno (Pan)
Mexico: Corona - Moreno, Meza, Reyes, Torrado (J Hernandez 69), Salcido, Arce, Gimenez (Guardado 56), Reyna (Aquino 66), Peralta, G Dos Santos.
Honduras: N Valladares - Figueroa, Izaguirre, Bernardez, Beckeles, O Garcia (Alvarez 60), W Palacios, Espinoza, Garrido, Najar (Bengtson 46), Costly (M Chavez 80).

Sep 6 - Panama City
Panama 0
Jamaica 0
Ref: Lopez (Slv)
Panama: Penedo - L Henriquez, R Torres, C Rodriguez (Cummings 46), Chen, G Gomez (Jimenez 76), Quintero, Sanchez, Godoy, G Torres, Waterman (Rojas 86).
Jamaica: Ricketts - Doyley, Morgan, Cummings, J Taylor, Powell (Woodbine 44), McAnuff, McCleary, Austin, King (Elliott 60), Shelton (J Johnson 74).
Sent off: Austin 58min.

Sep 10 - Tegucigalpa
Honduras 2 (Costly 26, W Palacios 61)
Panama 2 (G Torres 50, 90+2)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Geiger (USA)
Honduras: N Valladares - Figueroa, Izaguirre, Bernardez, Beckeles, O Garcia (Alvarez 81), W Palacios, Espinoza, Garrido, Costly, Bengtson (Welcome 90).
Panama: Penedo - Baloy, L Henriquez, Cummings, Chen, G Gomez (Godoy 62), A Henriquez, Quintero (Jimenez 46), Sanchez (Rojas 78), B Perez, G Torres.

Sep 10 - Kingston
Jamaica 1 (Anderson 90+2)
Costa Rica 1 (Brenes 74)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Marrufo (USA)
Jamaica: McCalum - Doyley, Mclaughlin, Morgan, Cummings, J Taylor, McAnuff, Elliott (Humphrey 84), McCleary, King (Anderson 69), Shelton (Beckford 46).
Costa Rica: Pemberton - Umana, Diaz, Gamboa, G Gonzalez, Acosta, Borges, Tejeda (Cubero 57), B Ruiz, Campbell (Johnson 79), Calvo (Brenes 68).

Sep 10 - Columbus
United States 2 (E Johnson 48, Donovan 78)
Mexico 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 24,524. **Ref:** Campbell (Jam)
United States: Howard - F Johnson (Parkhurst 46), Goodson, Gonzalez, Beasley, Jones, Beckerman, Bedoya (Zusi 84), Dempsey, Donovan, E Johnson (Diskerud 76).
Mexico: Corona - Mier, Reyes, Moreno, Salcido (Reyna 77), Gimenez (Herrera 65), Arce (Peralta 69), Zavala, Guardado, J Hernandez, G Dos Santos.

WC QUALS: CONCACAF – 4TH ROUND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (F)	8	5	1	2	10	6	16
COSTA RICA (F)	8	4	3	1	11	5	15
Honduras	8	3	2	3	10	10	11
Panama	8	1	5	2	7	8	8
Mexico	8	1	5	2	4	6	8
Jamaica	8	0	4	4	3	9	4

Remaining games
Oct 11 Honduras v Costa Rica; Mexico v Panama; USA v Jamaica.
Oct 15 Costa Rica v Mexico; Jamaica v Honduras; Panama v USA.

Each team plays 10 times

● The top 3 qualify for the finals
● The 4th-placed team will meet New Zealand (the Oceania section winners) in a 2-leg play-off (Nov 15 & Nov 19) for a place in the finals

AFRICA SECTION

● 5 finals places available

2nd round

Group A
Sep 7 - Brazzaville
Central African Republic 1 (Keita 23)
Ethiopia 2 (Saladin 46, Minyahil 61)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)

Sep 7 - Durban
South Africa 4 (Erasmus 28, Furman 45+1, Parker 84, pen 88)
Botswana 1 (Ramalthakwane 73)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Diatta (Sen)

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ethiopia (Q)	6	4	1	1	8	5	13
South Africa	6	3	2	1	12	5	11
Botswana	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
Cent Af Rep	6	1	0	5	5	12	3

Group B
Sep 7 - Freetown
Sierra Leone 3 (Mustapha Bangura 21, Kargbo pen 40, A Kamara 70)
Equatorial Guinea 2 (Juvenal 86, Ivan Bolado 89)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Mohamed (Sud)

**Sep 7 - Rabat*
Tunisia 0
Cape Verde Islands 2 (Platini 28, Haldon 42)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Bassama (Gam)
**Game subsequently awarded as a 3-0 win to Tunisia because Cape Verde fielded an ineligible player*

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia (Q)	6	4	2	0	13	6	14
Cape Verde	6	3	0	3	5	7	9
Sierra Leone	6	2	2	2	10	10	8
Eq Guinea	6	0	2	4	6	15	2

Group C
Sep 7 - Bakau
Gambia 2 (Jarju 45, 51)
Tanzania 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Muhoyemana (Rwa)

Sep 7 - Abidjan
Ivory Coast 1 (Drogba pen 83)
Morocco 1 (El Arabi 53)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Camlee (Sey)
Ivory Coast: Barry - Dja Djedje, Viera, Tiene (Aurier 57), Angoua, Y Toure, Tiehi (Ya Konan 67), Romaric (Bony 73), Kalou, Gervinho, Drogba.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP C – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast (Q)	6	4	2	0	15	5	14
Morocco	6	2	3	1	9	8	9
Tanzania	6	2	0	4	8	12	6
Gambia	6	1	1	4	4	11	4

Group D
Sep 6 - Kumasi
Ghana 2 (Waris 18, K Asamoah 61)
Zambia 1 (Sinkala 74)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Haimoudi (Alg)
Ghana: Dauda - Djaire, Afful, Boye, Jonathan Mensah, Mohammed (Essien 55), A Ayew, K Asamoah, Waris, Gyan (Agyemang-Badu 80), Wakaso (Atsu 56).
Zambia: Mwanza - Musonda (Mtesa 46), Nkausu (Chamanga 77), Himoonde (Tembo 46), Sunzu, Sinkala, Mbunga, Lungu, Kalaba, C Katongo, Mayuka.

Sep 6 - Omdurman
Sudan 2 (Gadir 3, Tahir 23)
Lesotho 3 (Seforumane 44, Lekhoana 75, Koetle 80)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Kirwa (Ken)
Sent off: A Abdalla (Sudan) 63min

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP D – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana (Q)	6	5	0	1	18	3	15
Zambia	6	3	2	1	11	4	11
Lesotho	6	1	2	3	4	16	5
Sudan	6	0	2	4	4	14	2

Group E
Sep 7 - Ouagadougou
Burkina Faso 1 (Nakoulma 54)
Gabon 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Seechum (Mrs)

Sep 7 - Mahley
Niger 2 (Cissa 34, Kamilou 70)
Congo 2 (Nguessi 68, Kapolongo 76)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Coulibaly (Mli)

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP E – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Burkina F (Q)	6	4	0	2	7	4	12
Congo	6	3	2	1	7	3	11
Gabon	6	2	1	3	5	6	7
Niger	6	1	1	4	6	12	4

Group F
Sep 7 - Calabar
Nigeria 2 (Emenike 45+1, Moses pen 51)
Malawi 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Nampiandraza (Mad)
Sent off: Mzava (Malawi) 53min
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ambrose, Echiejile, Obasanjo, Egwuekwe, Onazi, Mikel, Odiamadi (Nwofor 88), Moses (Igiebor 71), Musa, Emenike (Ameobi 84).

Sep 8 - Nakuru
Kenya 1 (D Owino 5)
Namibia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Grisha (Egy)

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP F – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria (Q)	6	3	3	0	7	3	12
Malawi	6	1	4	1	4	5	7
Kenya	6	1	3	2	4	5	6
Namibia	6	1	2	3	3	4	5

Group G
Sep 8 - Harare
Zimbabwe 1 (Mambare 41)
Mozambique 1 (Maninho 69)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Kefla (Mli)

Sep 10 - El Gouna
Egypt 4 (Ghaly 38, Aboutraika pen 51, M Salah 83, Zaki 87)
Guinea 2 (El Abd og 4, Soumah 57)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Bamlak (Eth)
Sent off: Zayatte (Guinea) 49min
Egypt: Ekramy - Fathy, Nagulb, El Abd, Shedid, Ghaly, El Solaya (Zaki 78), Aboutraika, Shikabala (Elmohamady 85), Eid (Kahraba 46), M Salah.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP G – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt (Q)	6	6	0	0	16	7	18
Guinea	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
Mozambique	6	0	3	3	2	10	3
Zimbabwe	6	0	2	4	4	9	2

Group H
Sep 8 - Porto Novo
Benin 2 (Pote 36, Babatounde 53)
Rwanda 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Bangoura (Gui)

Sep 10 - Bilda
Algeria 1 (Soudani 51)
Mali 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)
Algeria: M'Bolhi - Kimiaied, Mesbah, Bougherra, Medjani, Mostefa (Karaoui 63), Yebda, Taider (El Orfi 88), Djabou, Soudani (Belfoudil 88), Ghilas.

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria (Q)	6	5	0	1	13	4	15
Mali	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Benin	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
Rwanda	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

Group I
Sep 8 - Yaounde
Cameroon 1 (Choupo 42)
Libya 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Doue (IvC)
Cameroon: Itandje - Nounkeu, Chedjou, Nkoulou, Song, Enoh, Makoun (Mbia 15), Matip, Song (Ngadeu 87), Eto'o (Choupo-Moting).

SAN MARINO

Under-21 success

A goal from Juri Biordi against Wales in the Euro Under-21 qualifiers gave San Marino their first success in a UEFA competition since their under-17s beat Andorra in 2002. It was also their first-ever competitive win at under-21 level in their 86-match history.

Debutant...Nacho

SPAIN

Nacho makes debut

Real Madrid centre-back Nacho Fernandez made his international debut at the age of 23, coming on as a second-half substitute in Spain's 2-2 draw with Chile.

Manchester City's Jesus Navas scored an injury-time equaliser for the world champions after his club-mate Roberto Soldado had cancelled out the first of Eduardo Vargas' two goals for the South Americans in Geneva.

Record breaker...Svensson (left)

SWEDEN

Svensson's new record

Elfsborg midfielder Anders Svensson became Sweden's most-capped player of all time when he made his 144th appearance in the 1-0 win away to Kazakhstan.

TURKEY

Tear gas halts game

The Euro Under-21 qualifier against Sweden in Istanbul was interrupted by tear gas as police attempted to put a stop to anti-war demonstrations taking place near the ground.

The game ended 2-2 with Simon Gustafsson equalising in the last minute of added time for the visitors, after Musa Cagiran and Kerim Koyunlu had cancelled out Melker Hallberg's opener.

UKRAINE

Eight goalscorers

Eight different players got on the scoresheet as Ukraine beat San Marino 9-0 to record their biggest-ever victory in a senior international.

Scorer...Ukraine's Edmar

USA

Winning run ended

Costa Rica ended the USA's unprecedented winning streak of 12 games – which, at the time, was the longest current winning streak in international football and only three games shy of Spain's world record set in 2009 – with a 3-1 win in San Jose.

Beaten...USA's Tim Howard

Sep 8 - Lomé
Togo 2 (Makora 34, Akonnowo 90+2)
DR Congo 1 (Ebunga 82)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** El Alrach (Mor)

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP I – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon (Q)	6	4	1	1	8	3	13
Libya	6	2	3	1	6	3	9
DR Congo	6	1	3	2	3	3	6
Togo	6	1	1	4	4	11	4

Group J
Sep 7 - Luanda
Angola 4 (Buedes 2, Mabululu 47, Guilherme 60, Akhuti 63)
Liberia 1 (Macauley 78)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Jedidi (Tun)
Sent off: Williams (Liberia) 88min

Sep 7 - Marrakech, Morocco
Senegal 1 (Mane 84)
Uganda 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Bennett (SAf)
Sent off: Walusimbi (Uganda) 38min
Senegal: Coundoul - L Sane, Konate (S Sane 88), Gassama, Souare, Diame, Gueye, Salvet, Mane, M B Diouf (D Ndoye 75), Sow (Badji 90+3).

WC QUALS: AFRICA – 2ND RND: GP J – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal (Q)	6	3	3	0	9	4	12
Uganda	6	2	2	2	5	6	8
Angola	6	1	4	1	8	6	7
Liberia	6	1	1	4	4	10	4

● The group winners have qualified for the 3rd round.

3rd round

● The 10 qualifiers will be paired in 5 2-leg ties (to be played between Oct 11 & Nov 19), the winners of which will qualify for the finals.

ASIA SECTION

● 4.5 finals places available

4th round

Group A

WC QUALS: ASIA – 4TH ROUND: GP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
IRAN (F)	8	5	1	2	8	2	16
STH KOREA (F)	8	4	2	2	13	7	14
Uzbekistan (QP)	8	4	2	2	11	6	14
Qatar	8	2	1	5	5	13	7
Lebanon	8	1	2	5	3	12	5

Group B

WC QUALS: ASIA – 4TH ROUND: GP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
JAPAN (F)	8	5	2	1	16	5	17
AUSTRALIA (F)	8	3	4	1	12	7	13
Jordan (QP)	8	3	1	4	7	16	10
Oman	8	2	3	3	7	10	9
Iraq	8	1	2	5	4	8	5

● The top 2 in both groups have qualified for the finals.
● The 2 3rd-placed teams went forward to the Asia section play-off.

Asia section play-off

1st leg
Sep 6 - Amman
Jordan 1 (Al Laham 30)
Uzbekistan 1 (Djeparov 35)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 16,819. **Ref:** Nishimura (Jap)
Jordan: Shafia - Bani Yaseen, Zahran, Ali Mustafa, Al Dmeiri, Murjan (Amer Deeb 79), Abdel Fattah (Abdallah Deeb 60), Bani Attiah, Hashhash (Al Salfy 46), Hayel, Al Laham.
Uzbekistan: Zukhurov - Ismailov, Denisov, Krimets (Tukhtakhujaev 40), Inomov, Djeparov, Kapadze, Ahmedov, Khasanov, Tursunov (Iskandarov 88), Nasimov (Bakaev 65).

2nd leg
Sep 10 - Tashkent
Uzbekistan 1 (Ismailov 5)
Jordan 1 (Murjan 42)
Agg **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 25,621.
Ref: Williams (Aus)
Agg 2-2; Jordan 9-8 on pens
Uzbekistan: Zukhurov - Ismailov, Denisov, Tukhtakhujaev, Khasanov (Sergeev 58), Djeparov, Kapadze, Ahmedov, Shorakhmedov, Zelaev (Tursunov 46), Nasimov (Nagaev 82).
Jordan: Shafia - Bani Yaseen, Zahran, Ali Mustafa, Al Dmeiri, Amer Deeb, Murjan, Bani Attiah (Abdallah Deeb 56), Samir (Addous 83), Hayel, Al Laham (Al Salfy 90+1).

● Jordan will meet the 5th-placed South American team in a 2-leg play-off (Nov 15 & Nov 19) for a place in the finals; Uzbekistan are eliminated.

OCEANIA SECTION

● 0.5 finals places available

3rd round

WC QUALS: OCEANIA – 3RD ROUND – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
N Zealand (QP)	6	6	0	0	17	2	18
New Caledonia	6	4	0	2	17	6	12
Tahiti	6	1	0	5	2	12	3
Solomon Is	6	1	0	5	5	21	3

● New Zealand will meet the 4th-placed CONCACAF team in a 2-leg play-off (Nov 15 & Nov 19) for a place in the finals.

CONFIRMED FINALISTS TO DATE

Brazil (hosts)
Argentina
Australia
Costa Rica
Holland
Iran
Italy
Japan
South Korea
United States

● *The World Cup finals draw will be held on December 6 at Costa do Sauipe, Bahia, Brazil*

KEY TO WORLD CUP QUALIFYING TABLES
(F) = qualified for finals
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(QP) = qualified for play-off

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP

(South Asian Football Federation)

In Kathmandu, Nepal

Group A
Aug 31
Nepal 2 (A Gurung 18, Khawas 31)
Bangladesh 0
HT: 2-0

Sep 1
India 1 (Ishaq og 14)
Pakistan 0
HT: 1-0

Sep 3
Bangladesh 1 (Meshu 82)
India 1 (Chhetri 90+4)
HT: 0-0

Sep 3
Pakistan 1 (Bashir 13)
Nepal 1 (Magar 90+1)
HT: 1-0

Sep 5
India 1 (Nabi 90+2)
Nepal 2 (A Gurung 69, J M Rai 80)
HT: 0-0

Sep 5
Bangladesh 1 (Amali 31)
Pakistan 2 (Ishaq 36, Illah 90+2)
HT: 1-1

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nepal (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
India (Q)	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Pakistan	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Bangladesh	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

India qualified because of better head-to-head record against Pakistan

Group B
Sep 2
Afghanistan 3 (Fakhruddin 37, Azadzoy 75, H Barakzai 87)
Bhutan 0
HT: 1-0

Sep 2
Maldives 10 (Abdulla 4, Ashfaq pen 22, pen 45+1, 51, 53, 57, 86, Adhuham 75, Fashir 83, Umar 85)
Sri Lanka 0
HT: 3-0
Sent off: Imran (Sri Lanka) 27min

Sep 4
Sri Lanka 1 (Fazal 36)
Afghanistan 3 (Rafi 63, Fakhruddin 76, H Barakzai 86)
HT: 1-0

Sep 4
Bhutan 2 (Passang 25, Gyelshen 35)
Maldives 8 (Fashir 15, 69, Umar 45+2, Ashfaq 48, 51, 75, 79, Umar 81)
HT: 2-2
Sent off: Leki (Bhutan) 45min

Sep 6
Sri Lanka 5 (Izzadeen 19, 26, 50, 90+3, P Dorji og 32)
Bhutan 2 (Passang 45, Tenzin 58)
HT: 3-1

Sep 6
Afghanistan 0
Maldives 0

SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maldives (Q)	3	2	1	0	18	2	7
Afghanistan (Q)	3	2	1	0	6	1	7
Sri Lanka	3	1	0	2	6	15	3
Bhutan	3	0	0	3	4	16	0

Top 2 in both groups qualified for semi-finals

Semi-finals

Sep 8
Nepal 0
Afghanistan 1 (Ahmadi 11)
HT: 0-1

Sep 9
Maldives 0
India 1 (Mondal 85)
HT: 0-0
Sent off: Umar 90+6min, Rashed 90+6min (both Maldives)

Final

Sep 11
Afghanistan 2 (Azadzoy 9, Ahmadi 62)
India 0
HT: 1-0

OSN CUP

(friendly tournament sponsored by the OSN TV network)

In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Semi-finals

Sep 5
Trinidad & Tobago 3 (Plaza 55, K Jones pen 87, Molino 90)
United Arab Emirates 3 (Fardan 8, Mabkhout 40, Khalil 54)
HT: 0-2
UAE 7-6 on pens

Sep 5
Saudi Arabia 0
New Zealand 1 (Killen 78)
HT: 0-0
New Zealand: Moss - Reid, Lochhead, Sigmund (Bertos 62), Smith, Butler (Clapham 60), James, Brockie, Barbarouses, Wood (Killen 62), Durante (Howleson 70).

3rd-place match

Sep 9
Trinidad & Tobago 3 (K Jones 4, 5, Boucaud 86)
Saudi Arabia 1 (Hazazi 47)
HT: 2-0

Final

Sep 9
United Arab Emirates 2 (Khalil 9, Mabkhout 55)
New Zealand 0
HT: 1-0
New Zealand: Moss - Reid, Lochhead (Sigmund 71), Smith, Bertos, James (Clapham 55), Brockie (Bright 57), Barbarouses, Wood, Howleson, Durante (Woolich 65). *Sent off: Sigmund 88min*

FRIENDLIES

Saturday, August 17
Aug 17 - Johannesburg
South Africa 2 (Tshabalala 22, Chabangu 90+2)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 1-0
South Africa: Khune - Hlatshwayo, Van Heerden, Mkhwanazi (Gumede 70), Mthethe, Kekana, Zungu (Manyama 56), Letsholoanyane, Parker, Mathebula (Chabangu 58), Tshabalala (Nomandela 83).

Tuesday, August 20
Aug 20 - Kabul
Afghanistan 3 (Ahmadi, Atefi, Mahmoodi)
Pakistan 0
HT: 1-0

Saturday, August 31
Aug 31 - Gaborone
Botswana 1 (Sembowa 60)
India 1 (Okwi 17, 51, Kalanda 85)
HT: 0-1

Tuesday, September 3
Sep 3 - Gaborone
Botswana 1 (Ramatlhakwane 51)
Malawi 0
HT: 0-0

Wednesday, September 4
Sep 4 - Malabo
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Fidjeu 7)
Libya 1 (Zayed 75)
HT: 1-0

Thursday, September 5
Sep 5 - Doha
Qatar 3 (Ilyas 34, Majed Mohammed pen 86, Afif 90)
Mauritius 0
HT: 1-0

Friday, September 6
Sep 6 - Borisov
Belarus 3 (Balanovich 30, Rodionov 38, Sitko 69)
Kyrgyzstan 1 (Rustamov 55)
HT: 2-0
Belarus: Veremko - Zhavnerchik (Veretsilo 59), Filipenko, Yurkevitsov, Bordachev (Trubilo 59), Voindko (Tigorev 46), Dikhnovich (Kislyak 46), Balanovich, Hleb (Brassan 46), Sitko, Rodionov (Kornilenko 46).

Sep 6 - Tianjin
China 6 (Yu Dabao 7, 31, Zhang Xizhe pen 42, Sun Ke 45, Zheng Long 70, 85)
Singapore 1 (Ghani 17)
HT: 4-1

Sep 6 - Osaka
Japan 3 (K Honda 50, Kudo 69, Endo 76)
Guatemala 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 46,244. **Ref:** Gillett (Aus)
Japan: Nishikawa - Nagatomo, Morishige, Yoshida, G Sakai, Endo (Aoyama 79), Hasebe, Kiyotake (K Honda 46), Okazaki (Kudo 62), Osako (Kakitani 46), Kagawa (Konno 75).
Guatemala: Paredes - Vasquez, Castrillo, J Lopez, Gallardo, Trujillo (Torres 62), Contreras (Arriola 77), Marquez, Ruben Morales, Miranda (Ordonez 62), M Lopez (Perez 88).

Sep 6 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 2 (Al Mutawa 43, 86)
North Korea 1 (*scorer* 73)
HT: 1-0

Sep 6 - Beirut
Lebanon 2 (Maatouk 14, Haidar 48)
Syria 0
HT: 1-0

Sep 6 - Yangon
Myanmar 0
Hong Kong 0

Sep 6 - Incheon
South Korea 4 (Son Heung-min 21, 71, Koo Ja-cheol pen 48, Lee Keun-ho pen 58)
Haiti 1 (Belfort 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 13,624. **Ref:** Mallabab (Tha)
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Kim Young-gwon, Park Joo-ho, Hong Jeong-ho, Kim Chang-soo (Lee Yong 46), Ha Dae-sung (Han Kook-young 64), Go Yo-han (Lee Chung-yong 46), Lee Keun-ho (Kim Bo-kyung 76), Lee Myung-jae, Son Heung-min, Ji Dong-won (Koo Ja-cheol 46).
Haiti: Placide - Jerome, J-J Pierre (Ambroise 68), Lafrance, W Guerrier (Millien 88), J Louis (Herold 77), Constant (Jean 90), Musthac, Desmarais, Belfort (Nordie 68), Maurice (Saint-Preux 82).

Saturday, September 7
Sep 7 - Brasília
Brazil 6 (Jo 7, 33, Neymar 36, Ramires 57, Alexandre Pato 71, Luiz Gustavo 83)
Australia 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 40,986. **Ref:** Caceres (Par)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon (Marcos Rocha 77), Thiago Silva, David Luiz (Dante 63), Marcelo (Maxwell 46), Paulinho (Hernanes 63), Luiz Gustavo, Ramires, Bernard (Lucas Moura 63), Jo (Alexandre Pato 66), Neymar.
Australia: Schwarzer - McKewan, Neill, Ognenovski, McKay, Jedinak (Milligan 64), Brosque, Kruse, Holman (Rogic 70), Oar (Thompson 58), Kennedy (Duke 78).

Sunday, September 8
Sep 8 - Olva, Spain
Canada 0
Mauritania 0
Att: 300
Canada: Hirschfeld - Cebara, Henry (Farmer 88), Jakovic, Morgan (Dunfield 71), Osorio (Piette 65), Hutchinson, Bekker (Bagnon-Lapara 71), Porter (Aleman 65), Teibert, De Rosario (D Haber 65).

Monday, September 9
Sep 9 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 2 (Al Mutawa 79, Al Rashidi 88)
Bahrain 1 (Al Malood 73)
HT: 0-0

Sep 9 - Doha
Qatar 1 (Soria 48)
Lebanon 1 (Najarine 33)
HT: 0-1

Tuesday, September 10
Sep 10 - Foxboro, USA
Brazil 3 (Thiago Silva 23, Neymar 32, Jo 48)
Portugal 1 (Raul Meireles 18)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 62,310. **Ref:** Guzman (USA)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon, Thiago Silva, David Luiz, Marcelo, Luiz Gustavo, Paulinho (Henrique 80), Ramires (Oscar 90), Bernard (Hernanes 87), Jo (Alexandre Pato 75), Neymar (Lucas Moura 88).
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Pereira (Helder Postiga 70), Pepe (Neto 46), Bruno Alves, Fabio Coentrao (Antunes 54), Miguel Veloso, Joao Moutinho (Ruben Amorim 58), Veloso (Lica 83), Raul Meireles, Nani, Nelson Oliveira.

Sep 10 - Olva, Spain
Canada 0
Mauritania 1 (Ba 53)
HT: 0-0
Canada: Stamatopoulos (Borjan 46) - De Jong, Straith, Edgar, Ledgerwood, Jackson (D Haber 60), Pacheco (Piette 60), De Guzman (Dunfield 66), Nakajima-Farran (Aleman 66), Rickotts (Bagnon-Lapara 52), M Haber.
Sent off: De Jong 40min

Sep 10 - Tianjin
China 2 (Zheng Long 43, Yang Xu 57)
Malaysia 0
HT: 1-0

Sep 10 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 1 (Bai Ho 60)
Singapore 0
HT: 0-0

Sep 10 - Yokohama
Japan 3 (Kagawa 56, Endo 64, K Honda 72)
Ghana 1 (Acheampong 24)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 64,525. **Ref:** Beaffi (Aus)
Japan: Kawashima - Konno, Nagatomo (Makino 90+2), Uchida (G Sakai 54), Yoshida, Endo, Hasebe (Yamaguchi 82), K Honda, Kiyotake (Morishige 79), Kagawa (Saito 85), Kakitani (Osako 75).
Ghana: Braimah - Inkoom (Opare 65), Boye, Sumaila (Jonathan Mensah 46), Afful (Mohammed 65), Kissi Boateng, Adomah (Asante 54), Atsu (Ofosu 72), Chibsah, Acheampong, Waris.

Sep 10 - Kaduna
Nigeria 4 (Ideye 13, 43, Ameobi 53, Emenike 63)
Burkina Faso 1 (Simons 78)
HT: 2-0
Nigeria: Ejide - Echiejile (Benjamin 46), Ambrose (Kwambe 70), Egwuekwe, Olawunsa, Ogu, Onazi, Igiebor, Ameobi (Nwofor 64), Ideye (Odunwandi 80), Nsofor (Emenike 55).

Sep 10 - Johannesburg
South Africa 1 (Parker 90+5)
Zimbabwe 2 (Musona 48, Malajila 90+2)
HT: 0-0
South Africa: Koet - Mkhwanazi, Matheba, Hlatshwayo (Gumede 43), Masilela (Van Heerden 76), Letsholoanyane (Gamildien 46), Kekana, Zungu (Tshabalala 65), Mathebula (Erasmus 55), Parker, Mthembu (Manyama 46).
Zimbabwe: Arufe - Nyadombo, Zvirekwi (Chipeta 82), Chindungwe, Bhasera, Kalisanda, Phiri (Jaure 88), Billiat (Songani 90), Musona, Mukamba (Malajila 66), Nkhatha (Machapa 90+4).

Sep 10 - Jeonju
South Korea 1 (Lee Keun-ho 90+3)
Croatia 2 (Vida 64, Kalinic 70)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 40,723. **Ref:** Tojo (Jap)
South Korea: Jung Sung-ryong - Yun Suk-young, Kim Young-gwon, Kwak Tae-hwi, Lee Yong, Kim Bo-kyung, Son Heung-min (Yun Il-lok 70), Park Jong-woo, Lee Chung-yong, Koo Ja-cheol (Lee Keun-ho 77), Cha Dong-geon (Han Kook-young 46).
Croatia: Kresic (Jezina 90+3) - Srna, Vida, Lovren, Milic (Pivaric 46), Rubinjic, Rakitic, Perisic (Tomasov 80), Ademi, Eduardo (Benko 57), Kalinic (Halilovic 71).

Sep 10 - Geneva, Switzerland
Spain 2 (Soldado 37, Jesus Navas 90+1)
Chile 2 (Vargas 5, 44)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Jaccottet (Swi)
Spain: Valdes (Reina 58) - Arbeloa, Albiol, Sergio Ramos (Nacho 58), Monreal, Xavi (Iniesta 46), Javi Garcia (Koke 78), Cazorla, Pedro, Soldado (Negredo 65), Fabregas (Jesus Navas 46).
Chile: Bravo - M Gonzalez, Medel, Jara, Isla, Diaz, Vidal, Pizarro (Silva 46), Mena, Sanchez (Fernandes 90+3), Vargas (Beausejour 85).

2015 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman	2	2	0	0	9	0	6
Jordan	2	1	1	0	5	1	4
Syria	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Singapore	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Next fixtures
Oct 15: Jordan v Oman; Singapore v Syria.

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	2	1	1	0	6	1	4
Kuwait	2	1	1	0	4	2	4
Lebanon	2	1	0	1	5	7	3
Thailand	2	0	0	2	3	8	0

Next fixtures
Oct 15: Iran v Thailand; Lebanon v Kuwait.

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi Arabia	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
China	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Iraq	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Indonesia	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Next fixtures
Oct 15: Indonesia v China; Iraq v Saudi Arabia.

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain	2	2	0	0	3	0	6
Qatar	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Malaysia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Yemen	2	0	0	2	1	1	0

Next fixtures
Oct 13: Qatar v Yemen.
Oct 18: Malaysia v Bahrain.

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE	2	2	0	0	4	2	6
Hong Kong	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Uzbekistan	2	0	1	1	1	2	1
Vietnam	2	0	0	2	1	3	0

Next fixtures
Oct 15: Hong Kong v UAE; Uzbekistan v Vietnam.

Each team plays 6 times

Top 2 in each group and the 3rd-placed team with the best record qualify for finals, to which hosts Australia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup winner qualify automatically

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

EUROPE

Holland and Italy book their finals places

Happy days...goalscorer Chiellini (second left) celebrates with his Italian team-mates

Holland and Italy celebrated becoming the first European teams to book places at next year's World Cup when the final pieces of the continent's qualifying jigsaw began to fall into place.

The Dutch sealed their spot after a Robin Van Persie double gave them a 2-0 win in Andorra while Italy came from behind to beat the Czech Republic 2-1 in Turin with Mario Balotelli scoring the goal that sealed their berth from the penalty spot.

There was plenty for Germany, Switzerland, Russia, France, England and Bosnia to be happy about, but there was gloom for Romania, Israel, Republic of Ireland and the Czechs, as their hopes either disappeared totally or became no longer feasible.

There is also some renewed belief in Iceland, who have never reached a major finals, after they beat Albania 2-1 in Reykjavik to move into second place behind Switzerland in Group E.

Bosnia, who have also yet to play in a finals, stayed top of Group G on goal difference after they won an eventful game 2-1 in Slovakia and second-placed Greece beat Latvia 1-0 in Piraeus.

Holland, who were World Cup runners-up in 2010, had to wait until the 49th minute to take the lead against Andorra, who have lost all eight games, scoring none and conceding 24. Van Persie's second after a goalkeeping error means that Holland will take part in their 10th World Cup next year.

Qualification represents something of a redemption for coach Louis Van Gaal, who failed to steer the country to the 2002 World Cup in his previous stint in charge.

"We have done the job. We could not have qualified quicker for the World Cup than the way we did. We are the first from Europe," said Van Gaal.

Four days earlier, Holland could only draw 2-2 with Estonia and they needed a late Van Persie penalty to salvage a point.

Italy, one of only 13 teams who took part in the 1950 World Cup in Brazil, made sure they would be among the 32 nations at the finals next year with their comeback win in Turin.

Four days earlier, Alberto Gilardino had scored the only goal of the game against Bulgaria in Palermo to set up a potential party against the Czechs.

Libor Kozak threatened to ruin proceedings when he put the Czechs ahead after 19 minutes, but second-half goals from Giorgio Chiellini and Balotelli gave the Italians the points.

Back-to-back wins

Germany managed back-to-back 3-0 wins, over Austria in Munich and in the Faroe Islands. The results mean they will qualify if they beat Republic of Ireland at home in the first of their two remaining matches.

However, they cannot book their tickets just yet because Sweden's 2-0 win over Republic of Ireland in Dublin and a 1-0 victory in Kazakhstan mean they could still pip the Germans to top spot in Group C. Sweden's Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored after 27 seconds for their fastest goal in 101 years.

Technically, Republic of Ireland can still catch Sweden on goal difference, but defeats to Sweden and Austria cost Giovanni Trapattoni his job. After five years in charge, the Italian has left his position "by mutual consent".

Switzerland's 2-0 win over Norway in Oslo put them five points clear of Iceland at the top of Group E but their celebrations also had to be put on hold because they can be caught if they slip up in their final two matches.

Four days earlier, the two countries had played a thrilling 4-4 draw in Berne, when Iceland's Johann Gudmundsson scored an injury-time equaliser to complete his hat-trick.

Russia also look on course for Brazil after a 3-1 win over Israel put them top of Group F, a point clear of Portugal and means they still have their fate in their hands with visits to the bottom two teams, Luxembourg and Azerbaijan, to come.

Portugal beat Northern Ireland 4-2 in Belfast thanks to a second-half hat-trick from Cristiano Ronaldo. Northern Ireland had been 2-1 up but had Chris Brunt and Kyle Lafferty sent off.

France ended a five-match run without a goal with a 4-2 win over Belarus although they had to come from behind twice before winning with goals from Samir Nasri, Paul Pogba and a double from Franck Ribery, including a penalty.

Four days earlier, France failed to score against Georgia, while Spain pulled clear with a 2-0 win in Finland with goals from Jordi Alba and Alvaro Negredo.

England, having comfortably beaten Moldova 5-0 at home, escaped from Ukraine with a 0-0 draw that leaves them top of Group H with their fate in their hands and home games against Montenegro and Poland to come at Wembley.

San Marino scored their first goal of the campaign but have conceded 43 after losing 5-1 at home to Poland who kept their remote play-off chances alive.

John Holmesdale

Making certain...Van Persie scores Holland's second goal against Andorra

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina through, Chile and Colombia not far behind

In a marathon qualification competition like this, the key factor is invariably the way that teams react after an inevitable bad patch.

Argentina, for example, got off to a horrendous start, but coach Alejandro Sabella refused to panic. And at half-time in the game away to Colombia in November 2011 he began to find the blend which has carried his side over the line, qualifying for next summer's finals with two rounds to spare.

The virtues – and defects – of his side were evident in the 5-2 win in Paraguay which confirmed Argentina's presence in Brazil. With two penalties, Lionel Messi became the region's joint-top goalscorer in qualifying, illustrating the way that Sabella has housed the Barcelona star in a structure that has allowed him, finally, to approximate his club form for his country. Messi has an excellent on-field relationship with Fernando Gago, who is his supply line, and Sergio Aguero, one of a pair of strikers pushed wide to open up the opposing defence and create space for Messi and for the forward bursts of Angel Di Maria.

Argentina attack with exhilarating pace and skill, but the flip side, as Sabella is well aware, is that the team can be vulnerable down the flanks – which was the source of both Paraguay goals.

The attacking balance of the team will make Argentina one of the most watchable teams at the World Cup. And the same applies to Chile, who moved closer to qualification with a 3-0 win over Venezuela, and then confirmed their fine form by drawing 2-2 with Spain in a friendly in Switzerland.

Chile solved their mid-campaign slump by sacking coach Claudio Borghi and replacing him with Jorge Sampaoli. A disciple of 2010 World Cup coach Marcelo Bielsa, Sampaoli has his side playing with the same verve. They are full of pace, movement and attacking intent, and Sampaoli has a group of players who are approaching their footballing peak.

Chile have now won four consecutive games and have done so in style. One more win from the last two games will be enough to make them the first Chilean side to qualify for – as opposed to appear in – two World Cups in a row.

Their next opponents are Colombia, who are all but mathematically assured of returning to the World Cup for the first time since 1998. Colombia's change of coach came early in the campaign, with Lionel Alvarez giving way to former Argentina boss Jose Pekerman after just three games.

The switch proved inspired. Pekerman's emphasis on passing football nudged Colombia back towards their traditional identity, and with playmakers capable of splitting the opposing defence, and full-backs and wide midfielders stretching opponents, suddenly the team started to get the best out of centre-forward Radamel Falcao.

Outstanding...Suarez (right) after scoring his second goal against Peru in Lima

Between last September and this March, Colombia notched up four consecutive wins. Since then, however, they seem to have gone off the boil. Their 1-0 win at home to Ecuador was a laboured affair. Down to 10 men after half an hour, the visitors wasted a chance to secure a draw they probably deserved when Walter Ayovi struck his penalty wide. And then, needing just a point away to Uruguay to ensure qualification, Colombia were disappointingly passive. Although they clearly had the best of the first half, there was little zest in their play, and they ended up falling to two late goals.

Uruguay's resurrection

Uruguay's resurrection is the story of the last two rounds. They endured a disastrous 2012-13 and going into June's 14th round it looked as if even fifth place, the play-off spot, might be beyond them. But since then they have won away against both of their direct rivals: 1-0 in Venezuela last June, and now 2-1 in Peru. In a competition where there have been 37 home wins and just 12 away, these are huge results.

During Uruguay's horror run, coach Oscar Tabarez was altering tactical approaches with the air of a panic-stricken fly caught in a bottle. Success was achieved by going back to basics and sitting deep, leaving plenty of space to spring Luis Suarez. The Liverpool forward was outstanding in Lima, scoring both goals and constantly worrying the hosts' defence. Peru's chances of qualification effectively disappeared just before half-time, when Suarez provoked a red card for left-back Yosimar Yotun.

Through thick and thin, Tabarez has kept faith with the same squad. But a couple of new faces have emerged to good effect. Cristian Stuani, a striker now converted to a right-sided midfielder, made important contributions off the bench against both Peru and Colombia. And the second game featured the debut of teenage centre-back Jose Maria Gimenez, thrown in the deep end against Colombia's dangerous strikers because almost all the established defenders were suspended or injured. He played his part, and after three consecutive victories, Uruguay now have an eye on finishing in the top four.

October sees Uruguay's crunch visit to Quito to take on Ecuador in their mountain fortress. If they can pull off another away victory, this one at altitude, then Tabarez's side will thoroughly deserve an automatic World Cup slot.

Tim Vickery

Mission accomplished...Argentina celebrate qualifying for next summer's finals in Brazil

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

CONCACAF

USA and Costa Rica are through, Mexico struggle

The United States and Costa Rica qualified for the World Cup by getting the results they needed in the latest rounds of regional qualifying.

The US beat Mexico 2-0 in Columbus while Costa Rica drew 1-1 away in Jamaica. Their places in the 2014 tournament were confirmed when Honduras, third in the qualifying group, drew 2-2 with Panama.

Eddie Johnson and Landon Donovan scored in the second half for the Americans, who will be playing in a seventh consecutive World Cup.

"I'm proud of this team. I'm proud to be a part of it," Donovan said. "These guys put in a lot of hard work over the last two years and to have an opportunity in front of a crowd like this to qualify is pretty special."

Four days earlier, Costa Rica had beaten the USA 3-1 in San Jose to move into top place in the group. On the same night, Mexico suffered a surprise 2-1 defeat to Honduras at the Azteca stadium. The setback prompted the sacking of coach Jose Manuel De la Tore.

Down to earth...Mexico against the US

In jeopardy

Defeat against the USA pushed Mexico to fifth in the six-team group and put their chances of even taking fourth place, and an intercontinental play-off against New Zealand, in jeopardy.

"This is a team that could and should play better," said Luis Fernando Tena, who temporarily replaced De la Torre. "They have to take a step forward if we want to make it to the World Cup."

Costa Rica also had to wait on the late result to know they had booked their World Cup berth. Randall Brenes gave the Ticos the lead in the 74th minute before Jermaine Anderson snatched a point for last-placed Jamaica by scoring in the second minute of stoppage time.

It will be a fourth appearance at the World Cup for Costa Rica. They played at the 1990, 2002 and 2006 World Cups but did not qualify for South Africa 2010.

John Holmesdale

In front...Brenes shows his delight at putting Costa Rica ahead against Jamaica

AFRICA

Big guns are drawn together in play-off matches

Ivory Coast and Senegal have been paired together in Africa's World Cup qualifying play-off draw, reviving a rivalry that featured a stadium riot last year.

The other four ties will see Ethiopia play Nigeria, Tunisia meet Cameroon, Ghana take on Egypt and Burkina Faso against Algeria.

Senegal have been banned from using their stadium in Dakar since rioting brought a premature halt to October's African Nations Cup game against Ivory Coast.

The match was stopped 14 minutes from the end as frustrated home supporters lit fires on the terraces and threw objects on to the field after Didier Drogba's penalty had put the Ivorians in control of the two-legged tie.

Senegal have undergone a major overhaul since their Nations Cup elimination, appointing former France World Cup midfielder Alain Giresse as coach and dumping top players like Demba Ba of Chelsea.

They won their World Cup group despite hosting qualifiers in neutral Guinea and Morocco, and they will have completed their ban by the time they host the second leg of their play-off.

However, it has not yet been decided if they will play the match at the Leopold Senghor Stadium where last year's riot occurred.

The first legs must be played between October 11-15 and the return games between November 15-19. The winners qualify for the World Cup in Brazil.

Burkina Faso and Ethiopia are looking to reach the finals for the first time.

Ethiopia have a tough assignment against Nigeria while Burkina Faso will fancy their chances against mercurial Algeria who are ranked third in Africa despite having had a poor Nations Cup in South Africa at the start of the year.

Mark Gleeson

Major overhaul...Senegal boss Giresse

EXPERT GUIDE TO THE GROUP STAGE ● ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

EUROPA LEAGUE 2013-14

Interest...Tottenham's Roberto Soldado (left) and Chico of Swansea City are in this season's Europa League

From Anzhi to Zulte Waregem

The Europa League is probably the hardest club competition to win. Whoever wins in Turin on May 14 will have played a minimum of 15 games, and many more if they have come through the qualifiers.

There are plenty of big names in this year's group stage. They range from those who dropped out of the Champions League qualifiers, such as PSV and Lyon, to those who are competing in the group stage for the first time, such as Swansea City of the English Premier League and Shakhter Karagandy of Kazakhstan.

Tottenham Hotspur, Fiorentina and Valencia are the early favourites to lift the trophy in May. They will be joined by a further eight Champions League rejects for the knockout stages in February.

Contributors: Sam Beckwith (Czech Republic), Nick Browell (Cyprus, Germany), John Chapman (Belgium), Peterson Cresswell (Slovenia), Klaas-Jan Droppert (Holland), Lou Economopoulos (Greece), Miron Golman (Kazakhstan, Moldova), Victor Gusev (Russia), Jim Holden (Denmark), Brian Homewood (Austria, Switzerland), Howard Johnson (France), Dariusz Kurowski (Poland), Sid Lowe (Spain), Sigurd Odegaard (Norway), Rumen Paytashev (Bulgaria), Pedro Pinto (Portugal), Emanuel Rosu (Romania), Oleg Zademovsky (Ukraine).

48 TEAMS

GROUP A
98 Kuban Krasnodar
102 St Gallen
102 Swansea City
104 Valencia

GROUP B
94 Chornomorets
94 Dinamo Zagreb
98 Ludogorets
100 PSV

GROUP C
96 Elfsborg
96 Esbjerg
102 Salzburg
102 Standard Liege

GROUP D
98 Maribor
100 Rubin Kazan
104 Wigan Athletic
104 Zulte Waregem

GROUP E
94 Dnipro
96 Fiorentina
100 Pacos de Ferreira
100 Pandurii Targu Jiu

GROUP F
94 APOEL
94 Bordeaux
96 Eintracht Frankfurt
98 Maccabi Tel Aviv

GROUP G
96 Dynamo Kyiv
96 Genk
100 Rapid Vienna
104 Thun

GROUP H
96 Estoril
96 Freiburg
102 Sevilla
102 Slovan Liberec

GROUP I
98 Lyon
100 Real Betis
100 Rijeka
104 Vitoria Guimaraes

GROUP J
94 Apollon
98 Lazio
98 Legia Warsaw
104 Trabzonspor

GROUP K
94 Anzhi
102 Sheriff
104 Tottenham Hotspur
104 Tromso

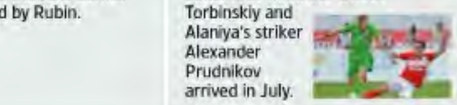
GROUP L
94 AZ
98 Maccabi Haifa
100 PAOK
102 Shakhter Karagandy

	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	STADIUM	SUMMER TRANSFERS	THE COACH	KEY PLAYERS	TACTICS
ANZHI K Russia	As third-place finishers in Russia they were supposed to start in the fourth qualifying round. However, they went straight into the group stage, taking the place vacated by last season's winners Chelsea, who got a Champions League berth.	UEFA does not allow international games to be played in the Republic of Dagestan, so Anzhi's home matches will be staged in Moscow.	Nearly all their top Russian and foreign players left after owner Suleyman Kerimov, who spent €234.2m on players, announced that they must now rely on young, home-grown talent.	Gadzhi Gadzhiev replaced Rene Meulensteen, who had only taken over from Guus Hiddink in July.	Talented goalkeeper Mikhail Kerzhakov, who is the younger brother of Zenit and Russia striker Aleksandr, will be important, as will Uzbekistan's Odil Akhmedov in midfield.	With all the changes in the club, tactics are difficult to predict. Gadzhiev will have to choose between the old Anzhi players and newcomers – which include several that he brought with him from his previous club, Krylia Sovetov. 4-4-2
APOEL F Cyprus	Current Cypriot champions, they lost on away goals to Maribor in the third qualifying round of the Champions League. Following Fenerbahce's suspension, APOEL won a lucky loser ballot to replace them in the Europa League.	APOEL play at the 22,859 seater, GSP Stadium, sharing it with Nicosia rivals Omonia and Olympiakos, as well as the national team.	For the most part APOEL concentrated on Portuguese reinforcements, bringing in left-back Helder Cabral, central midfielder Tiago Gomes and forward Esmael Goncalves.	In his first season at the APOEL controls, the Portuguese Paulo Sergio has also been in charge of Sporting Lisbon, Hearts and CFR Cluj.	Defensive midfielder Nuno Morais is the adhesive which holds the side together, while Urko Pardo is solid between the posts.	Sergio often rings the changes in terms of shape, chopping and changing from a 4-3-3 to a 4-1-4-1 or the present flavour of the month, 4-2-3-1. 4-2-3-1
APOLLON J Cyprus	Having beaten AEL in last season's Cypriot Cup Final, they qualified for the Europa League group phase with a 2-1 aggregate victory over Nice.	Instead of their home in Limassol, the 38-year-old Tsirion Stadium, they will stage their European games at the GSP ground in Nicosia, the largest football arena in the country with an official seating capacity of 22,859.	Their most important acquisition of the summer was the re-signing from Sporting Gijon of Argentinian second striker Gaston Sangoy.	Appointed in March 2013, Christiforou Christakis is the first coach to take charge of both male and female sections of the same club in UEFA competition.	In their squad they have players from 11 different countries. Greek right-winger Fotios Papoulis is one to watch.	Coach Christakis normally goes with a 4-2-3-1 system, the emphasis very much on defensive resilience, keeping the three lines in close proximity and making the most of dead-balls. 4-2-3-1
AZ L Holland	As Dutch Cup winners they had a narrow escape against Atromitos in the qualifying round. They won 3-1 in Athens, but lost 2-0 at home and went through on away goals.	The AFAS Stadium (17,023) was opened in August 2006. Previously known as the DSB Stadium.	Jeffrey Gouweleeuw (Heerenveen) and Jan Wuytens (Utrecht) have strenghtened a weak defence, while Nemanja Gudelj (NAC) is the new face in midfield.	Former amateur boxer Gertjan Verbeek is a fitness freak and puts a lot of emphasis on a physically strong squad.	Scandinavian midfielders Markus Henriksen and Viktor Elm are the brains of the team. Gouweleeuw and Wuytens are solid, while Aron Johannsson will try to succeed Sunderland-bound Jozy Altidore as top scorer.	AZ will use a traditional "Dutch" 4-3-3 system combining fitness with creativity. Roy Beerens and Johan Berg Gudmundsson are lively wingers while Nick Viergever has moved from central defence to left-back. 4-3-3
BORDEAUX F France	Despite finishing seventh in Ligue 1 they booked their Europa League place with a 3-2 French Cup Final win over Evian at the end of May.	Bordeaux still play in the outdated Stade Chaban-Delmas (34,327). However, there's a new 42,000-capacity construction underway, which should be ready for action in April of 2015.	Activity was particularly modest until the very end of the transfer window when, to everyone's surprise, skipper Jaroslav Plasil moved to Italian club Catania on a season-long loan to bring down the club's wage bill.	Francois Gillot is known for his straight talking, particularly when his team isn't performing. He arrived in July 2011, after three years at Sochaux.	With Plasil gone, it will fall on the shoulders of Ludovic Obraniak to provide some forward punch.	Gillot is a big fan of 4-2-3-1, making sure that his team has control of the middle of the park before breaking quickly and hitting hard on the counter-attack. 4-2-3-1
CHORNOMORETS B Ukraine	As finalists in the Ukraine Cup, they reached the Europa League group stage for the first time by beating Albania's Skenderbeu on penalties after a 1-1 aggregate draw. In the earlier rounds they saw off Dacia of Moldova and Red Star Belgrade.	Chornomorets stadium has a capacity of 34,164 and was unveiled in November 2011.	New arrivals included Oleksiy Gai from Shakhtar Donetsk, and Volodymyr Pryyomov, Rinar Valeyev, Sergey Samodin and Olexiy Antonov, all from Kryvbas.	Roman Hryhorchuk was appointed coach in November 2010 and guided the club back to the Premier League in his first season.	Centre-backs Pablo Fontanello of Argentina and Marcus Berger of Austria, Spanish midfielder Sito Riera and forward Olexiy Antonov.	Hryhorchuk's team make speedy counter-attacks though the skilful midfield trio of Dja Djedje, Bobko and Riera, supported by the holding pair of Gai and Kyrylo Kovalchuk. 4-2-3-1
DINAMO ZAGREB B Croatia	The Croatian champions dropped into the Europa League after losing to Austria Vienna in the Champions League play-offs.	Stadion Maksimir (38,923) also hosts many of the national team's home games.	Defenders Sime Vrsaljko (Genoa) and Tin Jedvaj (Roma) were sold, but Ivo Pinto was signed from Portugal's Rio Ave.	Branko Ivankovic recently returned for a third spell, replacing Kruno Jurcic, who was sacked after the club's failure to reach the Champions League group stage.	Arijan Ardemi plays a crucial midfield role, while Brazilian-born Croatia international Sammir has returned from injury. Much is expected of 17-year-old Alen Halilovic.	Dinamo played 4-1-4-1 under Jurcic, which easily became 4-3-3, with Husejinovic and Sammir pushing on into attack. Halilovic has mostly been used as an impact sub this season. 4-1-3-1-1
DNIPRO E Ukraine	Finished fourth in the league and qualified for the group stage by beating Flora Tallinn of Estonia 5-1 on aggregate in the play-off round.	The Dnipro Arena was opened in 2008 and has a capacity of 31,003.	Denis Boyko is on loan from Dynamo Kiev, while Alexandru Vlad was signed from Pandurii, Bruno Gama from Deportivo La Coruna and Sergiy Politylo from Chornomorets.	Juande Ramos was awarded a four-year contract in October 2010. He made his name at Sevilla and won the UEFA Cup in 2006 and 2007.	Croatian left-back Ivan Strinic, holding midfielder and skipper Ruslan Rotan, attacking Brazilian schemer Giuliano and forwards Roman Zozulya and Yevhen Seleznov.	Ramos prefers a 4-4-2 formation with Giuliano dictating the pace in attack, where Zozulya and Seleznov are skilful and prolific. 4-4-2

	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	STADIUM	SUMMER TRANSFERS	THE COACH	KEY PLAYERS	TACTICS
DYNAMO KIEV G Ukraine	After finishing third in the Ukrainian League, Dynamo were seeded in the qualifying round, where they beat Aktobe of Kazakhstan 8-3 on aggregate.	The Olimpiyskiy, which hosted the Euro 2012 Final, holds 70,000 and is the biggest stadium in the Ukraine.	Alexandar Dragovic (Basle), Benua Tremulinas (Bordeaux), Younes Belhanda (Montpellier), Jeremain Lens (PSV) and Dieumerci Mbokani (Anderlecht).	Former national boss Oleg Blokhin was appointed in September 2012 following the resignation of Yuri Semin.	Veteran goalkeeper and skipper Olexander Shovkovsky, towering defender Yevhen Khacheridi, right-winger Andriy Yarmolenko and powerful forward Mbokani.	The basic tactical build-up is 4-5-1 with the emphasis on the flank activity of Yarmolenko and Lens. Lukman Haruna is responsible for the rapid transition from defence to attack. 4-5-1
EINTRACHT FRANKFURT F Germany	Their impressive sixth-place finish in the Bundesliga last term was the best performance by a promoted German club since Kaiserslautern won the championship in 1998. Beat Azerbaijani side Qarabag 4-1 on aggregate in the play-off round.	More commonly known as the Waldstadion, the 48,500-capacity Commerzbank-Arena was rebuilt for the 2006 World Cup, at long last removing the athletics track which had kept football fans from the action.	Strengthened their ranks with Spanish front man Joselu, on loan from Hoffenheim, and Vaclav Kadlec from Sparta Prague.	Ex-Borussia Monchengladbach midfielder Armin Veh won the 2007 Bundesliga with Stuttgart and led Eintracht from the second division to Europe, via disastrous spells in charge of Wolfsburg and Hamburg.	Sebastian Jung, Sebastian Rode and Pirmin Schwegler turned down offers from elsewhere, while Alexander Meier is vital.	Although Veh has experimented with a 4-4-2 featuring a midfield diamond, last season's highly successful 4-2-3-1 remains his best bet. A high defensive line and plenty of tackling in the opposition half is the order of the day. 4-2-3-1
ELFSBORG C Sweden	The 2012 Swedish champions dropped down into the Europa League after losing to Celtic in the Champions League third qualifying round.	The Boras Arena, opened in 2005, has a capacity of 14,800 for European matches as UEFA does not allow standing.	Sierra Leone strike Mo Bangura arrived on a season-long loan from Celtic at the start of the Swedish league season in March.	Former Sweden Under-21 boss Jorgen Lennartsson has been in charge since 2011.	Anders Svensson, now aged 37 and who recently Sweden's most capped player, remains the midfield lynchpin of the side.	Elfsborg play a compact 4-1-4-1, based around holding midfielder Svensson and Bangura as the lone striker. 4-1-4-1
ESBJERG C Denmark	Won the Danish Cup and beat Saint-Etienne home and away in the play-off round.	The 18,000-capacity Blue Water Arena is a compact modern stadium with a noisy atmosphere. Renovated four years ago.	The key moves were the acquisition of Dutch striker Mick Van Buren from Excelsior and Senegalese striker Pape Pate Diouf on loan from Copenhagen.	Niels Frederiksen was senior vice-president of Danske Bank until 2011, when he quit to become a football coach. Took charge at Esbjerg in the summer.	Denmark Under-21 keeper Frederik Ronnow is likely to be busy, while the new forward partnership of Van Buren and Diouf appears to have gelled quickly.	Esbjerg's attacking philosophy sees them score and concede regularly. Defenders are encouraged to break forward, but there is also a resilience to a side with a strong team spirit and high work ethic. 4-4-2
ESTORIL H Portugal	Estoril were fifth last season, their highest-ever finish in Portugal's top flight.	Estadio Antonio Coimbra da Mota is small and cosy, with a capacity for 8,000 fans. It is located a couple of miles from the picturesque Estoril beach.	The Canaries lost two of their best players from last season when Lica joined Porto and Steven Vitoria was signed by Benfica.	Marco Silva played over 100 games for Estoril and took over as coach two years ago at the age of 36.	Carlitos has played in the Champions League with Benfica and Basle, while Evandro has a knack for scoring important goals.	Silva has impressed many in Portugal with his leadership skills, while his team has shown a pleasing commitment to attacking football. 4-2-3-1
FIORENTINA E Italy	After finishing fourth in Serie A, they entered the Europa League play-offs, beating Swiss side Grasshoppers on away goals.	Stadio Artemio Franchi (47,290) is named in honour of the Italian administrator who was president of UEFA between 1973 and 1983.	Fiorentina signed Mario Gomez from Bayern Munich but lost Stevan Jovetic to Manchester City. Other arrivals included Spanish midfielder Joaquin, former Milan captain Massimo Ambrosini and Slovenian midfielder Josip Ilicic from Palermo.	Former Italy striker Vincenzo Montella has impressed in Florence, having previously been in charge of Catania and, as a caretaker, Roma.	Big things are expected of Gomez, while Giuseppe Rossi is back from a long-term knee injury.	The 3-5-2 can also become 4-4-2 if Cuadrado shifts to right-back. Pizarro sits deep in midfield, with Ambrosini an alternative. Ante Rebic, a summer signing from Split, is a striking option on the bench. 3-5-2
FREIBURG H Germany	The Black Forest club surpassed all expectations by finishing fifth in last season's Bundesliga and qualifying for the Europa League/UEFA Cup for only the third time in their history.	Surrounded by beautiful woodland, the Dreisamstadion (24,000) – or Mage Solar Stadion in its current sponsored form – is one of the most attractive top-flight football sites in Europe. It has had solar panels on its roofs for the past two decades.	Nothing could be done to prevent Max Kruse, Jan Rosenthal and Daniel Caligiuri leaving, but new faces include ex-Germany striker Mike Hanke.	Christian Streich has enjoyed a wonderful 18 months in charge, proving to be just as inspirational with the first team as he was with the club's juniors.	The young central defensive pairing of Fallou Diagne and Matthias Ginter is an undoubted strong suit as are twin-holding midfielders Gelson Fernandes and captain Julian Schuster.	Streich's side adopt an attractive, energetic and combative style. They press high, keep a very compact shape and are excellent at finding unusual passing lanes in the attacking third. 4-4-1-1
GENK G Belgium	The Belgian Cup winners had a comfortable 7-2 aggregate win over Iceland's FH Hafnarfjordur in the qualifying round.	Given the problems at the nearby Ford factory, the Cristal Arena (21,500) is a beacon of hope for many people in the area. Fireworks remain a post-game speciality.	Iombe Mboyo was signed from Gent after his proposed move to the Premier League fell through, but David Hubert and Elyaniv Barda moved on.	Mario Been won the Belgian Cup in his second season at the club and is secure in his post. Genk are an ambitious club and under him will be going for a top-two finish.	Jelle Vossen's partnership with Mboyo will go a long way to determining how successful Genk are this season.	Genk play 4-4-2 with Vossen just behind Mboyo. Genk have a number of young academy players coming through – Siebe Schrijvers is one to watch out for. 4-1-2-3

	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	STADIUM	SUMMER TRANSFERS	THE COACH	KEY PLAYERS	TACTICS
KUBAN KRASNODAR A Russia	In Europe for the first time in their 85-year history, they finished fifth in the league and beat Motherwell and Feyenoord in the qualifying rounds.	They share the 31,654-capacity Kuban Stadium with fellow Russian Premier League side FC Krasnodar. Their own Gold Crown Arena (45,000) will be completed in 2016.	French striker Djibril Cisse joined on a one-year deal in July, having been on loan in Qatar with Al Gharafa.	Former Romania midfielder Dorinel Munteanu joined the club in August.	Goalkeeper Alexander Belenov impressed last season and was called into the national squad. Right wing-back Aleksei Kozlov likes to attack and Charles Kabore controls the game in midfield.	Cisse is fed with long balls from Kabore and will look to Ivelin Popov and Gheorghe Bucur for support. The coach relies on a fast, counter-attacking game.
LAZIO J Italy	Beat city rivals Roma in last season's Italian Cup Final.	The Stadio Olimpico (82,300), venue for the 1990 World Cup Final, rarely sells out these days for Lazio matches.	Argentinian midfielder Lucas Biglia came from Anderlecht for €8m.	The multi-lingual Yugoslav-born Swiss national Vladimir Petkovic was a surprise choice in June 2012 given his lack of experience of Serie A, but has so far proved the doubters wrong.	German striker Miroslav Klose and Brazilian midfielder Hernanes are key for Lazio.	The 4-4-1-1 set-up provides a solid platform on which Hernanes and Klose can shine.
LEGIA WARSAW J Poland	The Polish double winners beat TNS of Wales and Norwegian champions Molde in the Champions League qualifiers before losing to Steaua Bucharest and dropping into the Europa League.	The Pepsi Arena (capacity 31,103) officially opened in August 2010, although the main stand was completed a year later.	New arrivals include Lukasz Broz (Widzew Lodz), Henrik Ojamaa (Motherwell) and Dossa Junior (AEL Limassol).	Jan Urban is in his second spell at the club, having previously been fired by Legia in March 2010.	Legia's best player in qualifying, goalkeeper Dusan Kuciak, will be out absent because of injury. Jakub Kosecki is a danger when in top form.	Legia have defensive problems and the back four does not look like a stable formation. The creative Miroslav Radovic should play the main midfield role, serving Michal Kucharczyk and Kosecki on the wings.
LUDOGORETS B Bulgaria	Last season's Bulgarian champions dropped into the Europa League after being beaten by Basle in the Champions League.	As the 6,000-capacity Ludogorets Arena doesn't have a licence for the group stage, they will play "home" games at the national stadium (43,000) in Sofia.	Hristo Zlatinski from Lokomotiv Plovdiv, Fabio Espinho from Moreirence, Daniel Abalo from Beira Mar, Michel Platini from CSKA Sofia and Vurdzhil Misidzhan from Holland.	Ivaylo Petev, who led the team to two consecutive titles, was sacked after the first Bulgarian league game of the season. He has been replaced by Stoicho Stoev.	Left-back Yordan Minev and defensive midfielder Svetoslav Dyakov.	Dyakov and Zlatinski cover enormous amounts of ground in midfield, and they are supported by Ivan Stoyanov and Marcelinho. Slovenia's Bezyak is the preferred striker as Platini has been a disappointment.
LYON I France	Third in Ligue 1 last term, they beat Grasshoppers in the Champions League before a defeat by Real Sociedad put them in the Europa League.	Lyon are still playing at the Stade Gerland (40,000), where they've been since 1950, but a new, purpose-built ground, Le Stade Des Lumieres, should be open for Euro 2016. Lyon will move in at the start of the 2016-17 league season.	They lost two big players this summer in defender Dejan Lovren (to Southampton) and striker Lisandro Lopez (to Qatari club Al Gharafa), while bringing in no one of note.	Former Arsenal player Remi Garde took over in 2011 and landed the French Cup in 2012.	International midfielders Maxime Gonalons and Yoann Gourcuff are the biggest names in the team, while striker Bafetimbi Gomis is still at the club when everyone expected him to leave in the last transfer window.	Garde had opted for 4-2-3-1 this season, with Gomis relegated to the sidelines in a dispute over a potential move. However, with the striker now staying, the coach may chose to go 4-4-2.
MACCABI HAIFA L Israel	Runners-up in the Israeli league last season, they beat Xazar of Azerbaijan, Latvia's Ventspils and Astra of Romania in the qualifying rounds.	Maccabi share the Kiryat Eliezer (14,000) with local rivals Hapoel. In past seasons, games have been shifted to Tel Aviv for security reasons.	Spanish midfielder Rayo joined from Greek side Asteras.	Arik Benado, Israel's record cap holder with 92 appearances, had three spells with Maccabi as a player. Took over as coach in 2012.	Captain Yaniv Katan has been with Maccabi all his career, with the exception of one disappointing season with West Ham United.	Benado is likely to send his side out in a 4-3-3 set-up.
MACCABI TEL AVIV F Israel	Israeli champions, they beat Gyor of Hungary in the Champions League qualifiers but then lost to Basle and dropped down into the Europa League.	Maccabi share Bloomfield stadium (14,000) with Hapoel Tel Aviv and Bnei Yehuda Tel Aviv.	Goalkeeper Juan Pablo joined from Sporting Gijon.	Former Portugal and Juventus midfielder Paulo Sousa took over as coach this summer after a spell in Hungary with Videoton.	Former Sunderland striker Rade Prica joined from Rosenborg in January 2013 and played a key role in the title success.	Prica will be expected to be his side's main source of goals in Europe.
MARIBOR D Slovenia	Dropped into the Europa League after losing to Viktoria Plzen in the Champions League play-offs.	Tradition has it that the 13,000-capacity Ljudski Vrt has a talismanic effect on Maribor and Slovenia's national team.	Jean-Philippe Mendy has been among the goals since arriving from Koper, while Damjan Bohar has settled in after his move from Mura.	Ante Cacic, who replaced the successful Darko Milanic, has coached a dozen clubs in his Croatian home land, most notably Dinamo Zagreb and Osijek.	Brazilian striker and captain Marcos Tavares was top scorer last term.	When required, a basic 4-4-2 is given attacking pace with Agim Ibraimi on the left flank. Everything is moved up to lynchpin Brazilian striker Tavares as quickly as possible.

	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	STADIUM	SUMMER TRANSFERS	THE COACH	KEY PLAYERS	TACTICS
PACOS DE FERREIRA E Portugal	Finished third in the league last season and dropped down to the Europa League after losing to Zenit.	Mata Real only holds 5,000 people, so Pacos will play their home games in Felgueiras or at Porto's Estadio do Dragao.	Pacos is a small club and once again they had to sell some of their best players, with Josue joining Porto and Vitor going to Sporting Lisbon.	Former Portugal international Costinha replaced Porto-bound Paulo Fonseca and has big shoes to fill.	Defensive midfielder Andre Leao is the team's heart and soul.	Supporters will be hoping that Bebe, who is on loan from Manchester United, can have a big impact and score the goals that might get them through the group stage.
PANDURII TARGU JIU E Romania	Came through games against Levadia Tallinn, Hapoel Tel Aviv and Braga to reach the group stage in their first season of European competition.	Home games will be played at the 30,000-capacity Cluj Arena, which is 300km from Targu Jiu, as they couldn't secure a UEFA licence for their Tudor Vladimirescu stadium.	Brazilian creator Eric and Surinamese defensive midfielder Breeveld were the most important arrivals. Last season's key players Nistor, Radut and Voiculet have all gone.	Cristian Pustai took over in January, after Petre Grigoras unexpectedly left. A maths teacher, poet and football philosopher.	Lithuania's Deivydas Matulevicius is the side's dangerman up front.	Pustai changed the 4-3-3 system used by Grigoras, which slowed down the pace of Pandurii's game but improved their control of the midfield.
PAOK L Greece	Re-instated in the Champions League after losing to banned Metalist Kharkiv, but bumped down to the Europa League after losing to Schalke.	The Toumba Stadium seats 28,703 and has hosted national matches.	PAOK picked up defender Nikos Spyropoulos (Chievo), midfielder Sotiris Ninis (Parma) and winger Miroslav Stoch (loan from Fenerbahce).	Huub Stevens arrived this summer after a long career in the Bundesliga. He led Schalke to the UEFA Cup title in 1997.	Stoch has shown outstanding capabilities early on, while Salpingidis and Athanasiadis look good in front of goal.	Stevens has been working on a 4-2-3-1 formation for Europe, which leads to a more attacking style of play but can leave the defence exposed. The speed of winger Stoch will cause problems for opponents.
PSV B Holland	After sweeping aside Zulte Waregem, Milan proved to be too much for PSV in the Champions League preliminaries.	The Philips Stadium (35,000) was built in 1913 for the employees of the incandescent lamp and electronic company.	After a disappointing centennial year no fewer than nine starters have left. Jeffrey Bruma (HSV) and Karim Rekik arrived to enforce the defence, while Stijn Schaars and Adam Maher (AZ) are lynch pins in midfield.	In his maiden year, Phillip Cocu has the task of building a new team with home grown talents for the future.	Only 18 but the physically strong Rekik is a commander in defence. Zakaria Bakkali, one of Europe's biggest talents, is a dazzling dribbler on the right flank.	Schaars keeps the balance in midfield with Georginio Wijnaldum and Maher in attacking roles. Cocu switches between Tim Matavz and Jurgen Locadia at centre-forward.
RAPID VIENNA G Austria	Finished third in the Austrian Bundesliga and beat Asteras Tripolis and Dila Gore in the qualifying rounds.	Their home ground is the Gerhard Hanappi stadium, but they will play their group games at the Ernst Happel ground.	Modest transfer activity in the summer saw Christopher Dibbon and Samuel Radlinger join on loan from Salzburg and Hanover respectively. Thanos Petsos was signed from Greuther Furth.	Zoran Barisic took over last season when Peter Schottel was fired.	Steffen Hoffman is the key man in midfield.	Barisic will look to Guido Burgstaller and Terence Boyd to provide the goals.
REAL BETIS I Spain	Finished sixth in La Liga after another season in which they played some of the most enjoyable football to watch in Spain.	The Estadio Benito Villamarin is shaped like a huge horseshoe with one tiny end. It's noisy, passionate and fun.	Lost central midfielders Benat and Jose Canas, but signed a host of players including Cedric Mabwati, Javier Matilla and Joan Verdu.	Pepe Mel is not only a football coach, he is also a best-selling author of thrillers.	Ruben Castro and new playmaker Verdu are the ones to watch.	Betis have had to rethink their entire approach in the wake of Benat's departure, but Mel remains ambitious and has turned to pace either side of the class and control of Verdu.
RIJEKA I Croatia	After finishing third in the Croatian league last season, they pulled off a shock win against Stuttgart in the play-offs.	The picturesque Stadion Kantrida (12,000) is situated on the cliffside in Rijeka, with views of the Adriatic Sea from the stands.	They brought back midfielder Anas Sharbini from Al Ittihad and signed defenders Ivan Tomecak from Dinamo Zagreb) and Marko Lescovic from Osijek.	Matjaz Kek led Slovenia to the 2010 World Cup and took charge of Rijeka earlier this year.	Striker Leon Benko is back in Croatia after spells in Germany and Belgium.	Kek has played with a back three and wing-backs in the past, but his current team play 4-2-3-1, with midfielder Kvrzic looking to supply striker Benko.
RUBIN KAZAN D Russia	Finished sixth in the Russian league and won six games in a row in qualifying for the group stage, twice beating Jagodina, Randers and Molde.	A new 45,000 arena was built for the 2013 World Student Games and will be used by Rubin.	Mubarak Wakaso joined in August. Lokomotiv midfilder Dmitri Torbinskiy and Alaniya's striker Alexander Prudnikov arrived in July.	Kurban Berdyev is by far the longest-serving coach in the Russian Premier League, having been in charge since 2001. He won league titles in 2008 and 2009.	Club captain Gokdeniz Karadeniz is the team's driving force, while keeper Sergei Ryzhikov adds confidence to the team's defence.	Berdyev is known for his defensive style, which enabled the team to win two Russian championships in a row. He has tried in the past to make his team more attack-minded but without any great success.



	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	STADIUM	SUMMER TRANSFERS	THE COACH	KEY PLAYERS	TACTICS
SALZBURG C Austria	Finished second in the Austrian Bundesliga and lost to Fenerbahce in the Champions League qualifiers. Beat Zalgiris Vilnius in the Europa League play-off round.	The Red Bull Arena, opened in 2003, has a capacity of 31,895 and hosted games at Euro 2008.	Peruvian 19-year-old Yordy Reyna was the big signing, from Alianza Lima at £1.3mà, along with goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi from Liverpool. Jakob Jantscher, Ramalho and Marco Meilinger all returned after spells out on loan.	Roger Schmidt is in his second season at the club, having previously been with German lower-league sides Delbrucker, Preussen Munster and Paderborn.	Watch out for Jonathan Soriano up front and Sadio Mane in midfielder.	Schmidt is likely to set his side out in a traditional 4-4-2. 4-4-2
SEVILLA H Spain	Got in through the the back door. They only finished ninth in La Liga, but qualified after UEFA denied a licence to Malaga and Rayo Vallecano.	From the unique mosaic on the facade to the noise of the fans, the Sanchez Pizjuan is a special place to watch football.	Jesus Navas and Alvaro Negredo left, but almost a dozen players joined including Kevin Gameiro and Marko Marin.	Unai Emery is a bundle of energy who is meticulous in his work and always seeking a way to unpick the opposition.	Marin and Ivan Rakitic provide Sevilla with creativity.	Much has changed since last season, but intensity, aggression and speed remain vital to Sevilla's game plan. 4-3-3
SHAKHTER KARAGANDY L Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan champions, they beat BATE and Skenderbeu in the Champions League before losing to Celtic.	They usually play at Shakhter stadium in Karagandy, but in Europe they will use the Astana Arena, which is the new 30,000-capacity national stadium.	They signed Stas Pokatilov, Aslan Darabayev, Gevorg Ghazaryan and Ihar Zyankovich.	Russian coach Viktor Kumykov is very knowledgable and extremely ambitious.	There are no big stars in the team, but Sergei Khizhnichenko – who scored four goals in the qualifiers – had a trial with Feyenoord two years ago.	Altthough they use different tactical formations in domestic games, they are likely to bolster the defence in Europe. 5-4-1
SHERIFF K Moldova	Moldovan champions, they beat Sutjeska and then lost to Dinamo Zagreb in the Champions League before beating Vojvodina in the Europa League play-off.	The home ground, which is also called Sheriff, has 14,300 seats and is part of one of the biggest sports complexes in eastern Europe.	New signings include Spanish defender Melli from Gent, Israeli midfielder Kobi Moyal from Beitar Jerusalem and Brazilian attacker Cadu from Red Star Belgrade.	Veaceslav Rusnac is assisted by Juan Ferrando, who was previously Cesc Fabregas' personal trainer.	Miral Samardzic Cadu, Henrique and Marko Stanojevic are all important.	Sheriff are likely to adopt a 4-2-3-1 set-up in Europe. 4-2-3-1
SLOVAN LIBEREC H Czech Rep	Third in the Czech League last season, they beat Skonto Riga, Zurich and, in a major upset, Udinese to reach the Europa League's group phase.	Home games are played at the Stadion U Nisy, a 10,000-capacity all-seater.	Veteran playmaker Jiri Stajner's unexpected departure to Mlada Boleslav was the big news over the summer, forcing a major rethink of Liberec's playing style.	Jaroslav Silhavy joined Liberec from Ceske Budejovice in 2011.	Michael Rabusic is a tall, powerful striker whose performances for Liberec earned him a call-up to the Czech national team in August.	In the absence of Stajner's inspiration, David Pavelka has taken the playmaker's role in a pacier, more attack-minded Liberec side. 4-2-3-1
STANDARD LIEGE C Belgium	Standard beat KR Reykjavik, Xanthi and Minsk to reach the group stage	If you want fever pitch football in Belgium, then Sclessin is the place for you. The fans are the most volatile in the country and pitch invasions (even boardroom invasions), flares and smoke bombs are frequently on the menu.	Standard brought Igor De Camargo back from Hoffenheim and signed Mehdi Carcela from Anzhi.	Israeli Guy Luzon was a relatively unknown and unwelcome quantity when he arrived in the summer. He was coach of his country's under-21 squad and replaced the popular Mircea Rednic.	Michy Batshuayi and Imoh Ezekiel – supported by De Camargo – form a young, talented striking partnership, while William Vainqueur manages midfield.	Vainqueur and Yoni Buyens are the defensive shield in the middle of the park and the team are strong on the break. 4-4-2
ST GALLEN A Switzerland	Finished third in the Swiss Super League and beat Spartak Moscow in qualifying.	The AFG Arena was completed in 2008 and the cost of building it almost bankrupted the club. There is a shopping centre underneath and it has hosted several prestigious friendlies, with Spain, Brazil and Chile among the teams to have played there.	Arrivals include Goran Karanovic (from Servette), Alhassane Keita (Dubai Club) and Roberto Rodriguez (Bellinzona).	Jeff Saibene took over in March 2011. He led St Gallen out of the second division the following season and to a third-place finish last term. Previously coached Aarau and the Luxembourg under-21 team.	Dejan Janjatovic, Karanovic and Daniel Lopar.	Tunisian midfielder Stephane Nater sits in the holding role to protect the back four. 4-1-4-1
SWANSEA CITY A England	Despite being based in Wales they won the English League Cup and had comfortable victories over Malmo and Petrolul in the qualifying rounds.	Opened in 2005, the Liberty Stadium is the third largest ground in Wales and holds 20,750. It is also home to the Ospreys rugby union side.	Wilfried Bony cost a club record £12m from Vitesse Arnhem, while midfielder Jonjo Shelvey arrived from Liverpool for £5m.	Michael Laudrup's success last season saw him linked with a number of high-profile positions in Europe, including Spain, where he previously coached Mallorca and Getafe.	Goalscoring midfielder Michu was the star of last term's campaign, while Bony has already been on target in the Europa League qualifiers.	Michu plays behind Bony, although he can play further forward, with Shelvey moving into the central attacking midfield role. 4-2-3-1

	HOW THEY QUALIFIED	STADIUM	SUMMER TRANSFERS	THE COACH	KEY PLAYERS	TACTICS
THUN G Switzerland	Finished fifth in the Swiss Super League and beat Chikhura Sachkere, Hacken and Partizan Belgrade in the qualifying rounds.	The Arena Thun was completed in 2011 at a cost of €140m. It holds 10,000 and is used for a variety of events apart from footbal.	Josef Martinez joined on loan from Young Boys, while other signings included Luka Zuffi from Winterthur and Lukas Schenkel from Bellinzona.	Thun is Urs Fischer's second senior coaching role, having previously spent two seasons with Zurich.	Sekou Sanogo, Martinez and Dennis Hediger.	Set up in a standard 4-2-3-1, with Martinez looking to link up with Schnuewly.
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR K England	As fifth place finishers in last season's Premier League, they qualified for the play-off round, where they beat Dinamo Tbilisi.	White Hart Lane (36,230) will be full for Europa League matches, but Spurs have plans for a new 56,000-seater stadium on a site next door to their exisiting home.	Sold Gareth Bale to Real Madrid for €100m and reinvested the money, breaking their transfer record three times as they brought in Paulinho, Roberto Soldado and Erik Lamela.	Former Porto and Chelsea boss Andre Villas-Boas turns 36 in October and was a reported target for Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona in the summer. But he opted to stick with Spurs, where he has two years left on his contract.	New signing Christian Eriksen looks like he will play a key role in central midfield, orchestrating attacks.	Paulinho is a powerful presence in midfield, while Lamela could challenge Townsend for a place on the right flank. Chadli may challenge Sigurdsson on the left and Defoe is a striking option from the bench.
TRABZONSPOR J Turkey	Turkish Cup runners-up to Fenerbahce and beat Derry, Dinamo Minsk and Kukes of Albania to reach the group stage.	Huseyin Avni Aker (31,870) was built in 1951 and has two covered stands and open terraces.	The former Chelsea pair of Florent Malouda and Jose Bosingwa joined the growing band of former Premier League players now in Turkey. Defender Aykut Demir joined from Genclerbirligi.	Mustafa Akcay, a much-travelled coach in Turkey's lower divisions, joined from Trabzon's affiliate club, 1461, in the summer.	Poland international Adrian Mierzejewski is a key figure in midfield, while Paulo Henrique's seven goals in six games made the 24-year-old Brazilian the top scorer in the qualifying rounds.	Trabzon favour 4-1-4-1, with Zokora or Volkan as the holding midfielder behind two central midfielders and two wide men. Giant Austrian striker Marc Jancko is an option on the bench.
TROMSO K Norway	Beat Differdange but lost to Besiktas. However, they took their place in the group stage when the Turkish team were banned from the tournament.	The Alfheim Stadium holds 6,859 and has an artificial pitch.	Attacking midfielder Ruben Yttergard Jensen's move to Kaiserslautern was a great loss for the club. Adnan Causevic, Jaroslaw Fojut and Josh Pritchard were all recruited.	Agnar Christensen is club coach and Steinar Nilssen was recently appointed as his assistant.	The team is built around Marcus Sahlmann, Ruben Kristiansen, Remi Johansen, Thomas K Bendiksen and Zdenek Ondrasek.	Tromso have adopted a formation based on a sound defensive approach, relying on counter-attacking football.
VALENCIA A Spain	Fifth in La Liga, Europa League qualification was a disappointment for Valencia after three third-placed finishes in a row.	They might have tried – and failed – to sell the Mestalla, but it remains one of the noisiest grounds in Spain.	Lost their best player – Roberto Soldado – but replaced him with Helder Postiga. Javi Fuego and Oriol Romeu arrived to strengthen midfield.	Miroslav Djukic was popular as a player and welcomed as a coach. He insists he wants his side to compete with the big two.	Ever Banega will be the main creative force this season – if he can stay fit and out of trouble. If Sergio Canales can get fit he could also play a key role.	Djukic says he wants his side to take the game to the opposition, with high pressing and attacking full-backs.
VITORIA GUIMARAES I Portugal	Won the Portuguese Cup, beating Benfica 1-0 in the Final, to qualify directly for the group stage.	Estadio D Afonso Henriques, named after the first king of Portugal, has a capacity of 30,165.	Portugal midfielder Andre Santos, signed on a free transfer, and central defender Abdoulaye, on loan from Porto, should add quality and depth to the squad.	Rui Vitoria made his name at Pacos de Ferreira and confirmed his potential by leading Vitoria to their first Portuguese Cup.	Big things are expected of Andre Santos who failed to impress at Deportivo La Coruna last season.	Santos is expected to be the maestro in midfield, with support from under-21 international Tiago Rodrigues.
WIGAN ATHLETIC D England	Qualified directly for the group stage after beating Manchester City in the FA Cup Final, although a few days later they became the first FA Cup-winning side to be relegated in the same season.	The DW stadium (25,000) was opened in 1999 and is also home to rugby league team Wigan Warriors.	Following relegation, Roberto Martinez left for Everton and took players with him. James McClean joined from Sunderland.	Former Scotland international Owen Coyle enjoyed success with Burnley, but was relegated from the Premier League with Bolton Wanderers in 2012.	McClean, Shaun Maloney and Ben Watson could all be crucial.	With lots of changes over the summer, Coyle has struggled to find a consistent starting line-up. Marc-Antoine Fortune has come in for the injured Gary Holt, while Callum McManaman is another wide option.
ZULTE WAREGEM D Belgium	A last-minute goal in Nicosia gave Zulte Waregem a 3-2 aggregate win over APOEL.	Zulte Waregem's stadium, the Regenboogstadion, holds 10,200 and does not meet UEFA regulations for holding European ties. The Europa League ties will be held at Club Brugge's Jan Breydel stadium.	Chelsea's Thorgan Hazard returned for another season and the club also signed Sven Kums, Ibrahima Conte and Bryan Verboom.	Ex-policeman Francky Dury took Zulte Waregem to within minutes of automatic qualification for the Champions League.	Junior Malanda and Hazardrun the show in midfield. Habib Habibou, who failed at Leeds United, leads the attack and key players in an excellent back four are veterans Davy de Fauw and Karel D'Haene.	Zulte Waregem play either 4-2-3-1 or 4-4-2, with the former being preferred most recently. They are known for their never-say-die attitude and a defence that is one of the best in Belgium.

BELGIUM

Pundit in big trouble

Charleroi striker Harlem Gnohere demanded a public apology and damages after television commentator Stephane Pauwels described him as being as "fat as a pig".

Pauwels made his comment on air during Charleroi's 2-1 defeat at home to Kortrijk.

Not happy...Gnohere

BULGARIA

Club pull out of Cup

Third division club Shumen forfeited their Bulgarian Cup game against top-flight side Cherniomorets to protect their young players from 'mental anguish'.

Club president Georgi Georgiev decided there was no need for his team to play against such strong opposition, explaining: "In order not to burden mentally our young boys, the team refuse to participate in the Bulgarian Cup."

Beroe Stara team-mates Ivan Karadzhov and Elio Martins were sent off for fighting each other on their way to the dressing room at half-time in their match against Neftohimik Burgas.

Beroe were leading 2-0 at the time and the referee immediately produced two red cards, so the players could not return for the second half. Beroe were later reduced to eight men but held on to their lead.

Dismissed...Karadzhov

CYPRUS

Super Cup success

League champions APOEL beat Apollon 1-0 in the Cypriot Super Cup with a goal from Mario Sergio.

Cup winner...Sergio

ENGLAND

Reds are 100 per cent

After three Premier League games, Liverpool were the only team with a 100 per cent record. They won all three 1-0, with Daniel Sturridge scoring each time, and made their best start to a league campaign since the 1994-95 season.

New Manchester United manager David Moyes, whose side lost away to Liverpool, has yet to win at Anfield in 12 attempts.

FAROE ISLANDS

No seventh heaven

Vikingur retained the Faroese Cup, beating EB/Streymur 2-0 in a repeat of last year's Final. EB/Streymur were appearing in their seventh successive Final.

Three goals...Sturridge (no15)

Club Results

EUROPE

EUROPEAN SUPER CUP

(Champions League winners, Bayern Munich v Europa League winners, Chelsea)

Aug 30 - Prague (Eden)
Bayern Munich (Ger) 2 (Ribery 47, Javi Martinez 120+1)
Chelsea (Eng) 2 (Fernando Torres 5, Hazard 93)
Att: **HT:** 0-1, **90mins:** 1-1, **Att:** 17,686.
Ref: Eriksson (Swe)
Bayern 5-4 on pens
Bayern: Neuer - Rafinha (Javi Martinez 56), Boateng, Dante, Alaba, Robben (Shaqiri 96), Muller (Götze 71), Lahm, Kroos, Ribery, Mandzukic.
Chelsea: Cech - Ivanovic, Cahill, David Luiz, Cole, Ramires, Lampard, Schürrle (Mikel 87), Oscar, Hazard (Terry 113), Fernando Torres (Lukaku 88).
Sent off: Ramires 65min.
Penalty shoot-out (Bayern went 1st)

Alaba +	David Luiz +	(1-1)
Kroos +	Oscar +	(2-2)
Lahm +	Lampard +	(3-3)
Ribery +	Cole +	(4-4)
Shaqiri +	Lukaku X (saved)	(5-4)

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

4th qualifying round

1st legs - Aug 20/21; 2nd legs - Aug 27/28
Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) v Austria Vienna (Aut)
0-2, 3-2 (agg 3-4)
Fenerbahce (Tur) v Arsenal (Eng)*
0-3, 0-2 (agg 0-5)
Ludogorets (Bul) v Basle (Swi)
2-4, 0-2 (agg 2-6)
Lyon (Fra) v Real Sociedad (Spa)*
0-2, 0-2 (agg 0-4)
Pacos de Ferreira (Por)* v Zenit St Petersburg (Rus)*
1-4, 2-4 (agg 3-8)
PSV Eindhoven (Hol) v Milan (Ita)*
1-1, 0-3 (agg 1-4)
Schalke (Ger) v PAOK Salonika (Gre)[1]
1-1, 3-2 (agg 4-3)
Shakhtar Karagandy (Kaz) v Celtic (Sco)
2-0, 0-3 (agg 2-3)
Steaua Bucharest (Rom) v Legia Warsaw (Pol)
1-1, 2-2 (agg 3-3, Steaua on away goals)
Viktoria Plzen (CzR) v Maribor (Slo)
3-1, 1-0 (agg 4-1)
**Team entered at this stage*
[1]Metalist Kharkiv (Ukr) beat PAOK Salonika in the 3rd qualifying round but were subsequently barred from 2013-14 UEFA competitions for involvement in match-fixing; PAOK took their place in the 4th qualifying round

Winners qualified for group stage; losers[2] entered Europa League at group stage
[2]Except Fenerbahce, who were subsequently barred from 2013-14 UEFA competitions for involvement in match-fixing

Group stage fixtures

Group A
Sep 17 Man United (Eng)* v Leverkusen (Ger)*
Real Sociedad (Spa) v Shakhtar (Ukr)*
Oct 2 Bayer Leverkusen v Real Sociedad
Shakhtar Donetsk v Manchester United
Oct 23 Bayer Leverkusen v Shakhtar Donetsk
Manchester United v Real Sociedad
Nov 5 Real Sociedad v Manchester United
Shakhtar Donetsk v Bayer Leverkusen
Nov 27 Bayer Leverkusen v Manchester United
Shakhtar Donetsk v Real Sociedad
Dec 10 Manchester United v Shakhtar Donetsk
Real Sociedad v Bayer Leverkusen

Group B
Sep 17 Copenhagen (Den)* v Juventus (Ita)*
Galatasaray (Tur)* v Real Madrid (Spa)*
Oct 2 Juventus v Galatasaray
Real Madrid v Copenhagen
Oct 23 Galatasaray v Copenhagen
Real Madrid v Juventus
Nov 5 Copenhagen v Galatasaray
Juventus v Real Madrid
Nov 27 Juventus v Copenhagen
Real Madrid v Galatasaray
Dec 10 Copenhagen v Real Madrid
Galatasaray v Juventus

Group C
Sep 17 Benfica (Por)* v Anderlecht (Bel)*
Olympiakos (Gre)* v PSG (Fra)*
Oct 2 Anderlecht v Olympiakos
Paris Saint-Germain v Benfica
Oct 23 Anderlecht v Paris Saint-Germain
Benfica v Olympiakos
Nov 5 Olympiakos v Benfica
Paris Saint-Germain v Anderlecht
Nov 27 Anderlecht v Benfica
Paris Saint-Germain v Olympiakos
Dec 10 Benfica v Paris Saint-Germain
Olympiakos v Anderlecht

Group D
Sep 17 Bayern (Ger)* v CSKA Moscow (Rus)*
Viktoria Plzen (CzR) v Man City (Eng)*
Oct 2 CSKA Moscow v Viktoria Plzen
Manchester City v Bayern Munich
Oct 23 Bayern Munich v Viktoria Plzen
CSKA Moscow v Manchester City
Nov 5 Manchester City v CSKA Moscow
Viktoria Plzen v Bayern Munich
Nov 27 CSKA Moscow v Bayern Munich
Manchester City v Viktoria Plzen
Dec 10 Bayern Munich v Manchester City
Viktoria Plzen v CSKA Moscow

Group E
Sep 18 Chelsea (Eng)* v Basle (Swi)
Schalke (Ger) v Steaua Bucharest (Rom)
Oct 1 Basle v Schalke
Steaua Bucharest v Chelsea
Oct 22 Schalke v Chelsea
Steaua Bucharest v Basle
Nov 6 Basle v Steaua Bucharest
Chelsea v Schalke
Nov 26 Basle v Chelsea
Steaua Bucharest v Schalke
Dec 11 Chelsea v Steaua Bucharest
Schalke v Basle

Group F
Sep 18 Marseille (Fra)* v Arsenal (Eng)
Napoli (Ita)* v Borussia Dortmund (Ger)*
Oct 1 Arsenal v Napoli
Borussia Dortmund v Marseille
Oct 22 Arsenal v Borussia Dortmund
Marseille v Napoli
Nov 6 Borussia Dortmund v Arsenal
Napoli v Marseille
Nov 26 Arsenal v Marseille
Borussia Dortmund v Napoli
Dec 11 Marseille v Borussia Dortmund
Napoli v Arsenal

Group G
Sep 18 Atletico Madrid (Spa)* v Zenit (Rus)
Austria Vienna (Aut) v Porto (Por)*
Oct 1 Porto v Atletico Madrid
Zenit St Petersburg v Austria Vienna
Oct 22 Austria Vienna v Atletico Madrid
Porto v Zenit St Petersburg
Nov 6 Atletico Madrid v Austria Vienna
Zenit St Petersburg v Porto
Nov 26 Porto v Austria Vienna
Zenit St Petersburg v Atletico Madrid
Dec 11 Atletico Madrid v Porto
Austria Vienna v Zenit St Petersburg

Group H
Sep 18 Barcelona (Spa)* v Ajax (Hol)*
Milan (Ita) v Celtic (Sco)
Oct 1 Ajax v Milan
Celtic v Barcelona
Oct 22 Celtic v Ajax
Milan v Barcelona
Nov 6 Ajax v Celtic
Barcelona v Milan
Nov 26 Ajax v Barcelona
Celtic v Milan
Dec 11 Barcelona v Celtic
Milan v Ajax

**Team entering at this stage*

Top 2 in each group qualify for 1st knockout round

EUROPA LEAGUE

4th qualifying round

1st legs - Aug 22; 2nd legs - Aug 29/30
Aktobe (Kaz) v Dynamo Kiev (Ukr)* 2-3, 1-5 (agg 3-8)
Apollon (Cyp)* v Nice (Fra)* 2-0, 0-1 (agg 2-1)
Atromitos (Gre)* v AZ Alkmaar (Hol)*
1-3, 2-0 (agg 3-3, AZ on away goals)
Chernomorets (Ukr) v Skenderbeu (Alb)*
1-0, 0-1 (aet) (agg 1-1, Chernomorets 7-6 on pens)
Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo)* v Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)*
0-5, 0-3 (agg 0-8)
Elfsborg (Swe)* v Nordsjaelland (Den)*
1-1, 1-0 (agg 2-1)
Esbjerg (Den)* v Saint-Etienne (Fra) 4-3, 1-0 (agg 5-3)
Estoril (Por) v Paesching (Aut)* 2-0, 2-1 (agg 4-1)
FH (Ice)* v Genk (Bel)* 0-2, 2-5 (agg 2-7)
Grasshoppers (Swi)* v Fiorentina (Ita)*
1-2, 1-0 (agg 2-2, Fiorentina on away goals)
Jablonec (CzR) v Betis (Spa)* 1-2, 0-6 (agg 1-8)
Kuban Krasnodar (Rus) v Feyenoord (Hol)*
1-0, 2-1 (agg 3-1)
Kukesi (Alb) v Trabzonspor (Tur) 0-2, 1-3 (agg 1-5)
Maccabi Haifa (Isr) v Astra (Rom) 2-0, 1-1 (agg 3-1)
Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)* v PAOK Salonika (Gre)*
match cancelled[1]
Minsk (Bls) v Standard Liege (Bel) 0-2, 1-3 (agg 1-5)
Molde (Nor)* v Rubin Kazan (Rus) 0-2, 0-3 (agg 0-5)
Nomme Kalju (Est)* v Dnipro (Ukr)* 1-3, 0-2 (agg 1-5)
Panduri (Rom) v Braga (Por)* 0-1, 2-0 (aet) (agg 2-1)
Partizan Belgrade (Ser)* v Thun (Swi) 1-0, 0-3 (agg 1-3)
Qarabag (Aze) v Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)*
0-2, 1-2 (agg 1-4)
Rapid Vienna (Aut) v Dila (Geo) 1-0, 3-0 (agg 4-0)
Rijeka (Cro) v Stuttgart (Ger) 2-1, 2-2 (agg 4-3)
Salzburg (Aut)* v Zalgiris (Lit) 5-0, 2-0 (agg 7-0)
Sevilla (Spa) v Slask Wroclaw (Pol) 4-1, 5-0 (agg 9-1)
St Gallen (Swi)* v Spartak Moscow (Rus)*
1-1, 4-2 (agg 5-3)
Swansea City (Wal) v Petrolul (Rom) 5-1, 1-2 (agg 6-3)
Tromso (Nor) v Besiktas (Tur)* 2-1, 0-2 (agg 2-3,
but Besiktas subsequently barred[2])
Utinesa (Ita) v Slovan Liberec (CzR) 1-3, 1-1 (agg 2-4)
Vojvodina (Ser) v Sheriff (Mol)* 1-1, 1-2 (agg 2-3)
Zulte Waregem (Bel)* v APOEL (Cyp)*[3] 1-1, 2-1 (agg 3-2)
**Team entered at this stage*
[1]PAOK Salonika were handed a place in the Champions League 4th qualifying round following the barring of Metalist Kharkiv (Ukr); Maccabi Tel Aviv were given direct entry into Europa League group stage
[2]Tromso were reinstated in the competition and given entry to the group stage after Besiktas were barred from 2013-14 UEFA competitions for involvement in match-fixing

Winners[1] qualified for group stage
[1]APOEL were also given entry to the group stage after their name was selected in a special draw of all the losing 4th qualifying round teams to decide which of them would replace Fenerbahce. The Turkish club had qualified for the Europa League group stage as one of the losing teams from the Champions League 4th qualifying round, but were subsequently barred from 2013-14 UEFA competitions

Group stage draw

Group A
Kuban Krasnodar (Rus), St Gallen (Swi), Swansea City (Wal), Valencia (Spa)*

Group B
Chernomorets (Ukr), Dinamo Zagreb (Cro)*, Ludogorets (Bul)*, PSV Eindhoven (Hol)*

Group C
Elfsborg (Swe), Esbjerg (Den), Salzburg (Aut), Standard Liege (Bel)

Group D
Maribor (Slo)*, Rubin Kazan (Rus), Vitgan Athletic (Eng)*, Zulte Waregem (Bel)

Group E
Dnipro (Ukr), Fiorentina (Ita), Pacos de Ferreira (Por)*, Panduri (Rom)

Group F
APOEL (Cyp), Bordeaux (Fra)*, Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger), Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)

Group G
Dynamo Kiev (Ukr), Genk (Bel), Rapid Vienna (Aut), Thun (Swi)

Group H
Estoril (Por), Freiburg (Ger)*, Sevilla (Spa), Slovan Liberec (CzR)

Group I
Betis (Spa), Lyon (Fra)*, Rijeka (Cro), Vitoria Guimaraes (Por)*

Group J
Apollon (Cyp), Lazio (Ita)*, Legia Warsaw (Pol)*, Trabzonspor (Tur)

Group K
Anzhi Makhachkala (Rus)*, Sheriff (Mol), Tottenham Hotspur (Eng), Tromso (Nor)

Group L
AZ Alkmaar (Hol), Maccabi Haifa (Isr), PAOK Salonika (Gre)**, Shakhtar Karagandy (Kaz)*
Team entering at this stage (PAOK re-entering)*

Top 2 in each group qualify for 1st knockout round

AUSTRIA

Aug 17: Sturm 1 Salzburg 1; Wacker 2 Ried 3; Grodig 4 Wolfsberger 3; Austria 5 Wiener Neustadt 0.
Aug 18: Admira 2 Rapid 0.
Aug 24: Ried 3 Sturm 0; Wolfsberger 1 Austria 4; Wiener Neustadt 1 Wacker 1.
Aug 25: Rapid 0 Grodig 1; Salzburg 1 Admira 0.
Aug 31: Sturm 4 Wolfsberger 1; Grodig 3 Wiener Neustadt 6; Austria 1 Wacker 1; Admira 1 Ried 4.
Sep 1: Salzburg 1 Rapid 1.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	7	4	3	0	18	6	15
Ried	7	4	3	0	15	7	15
Grodig	7	4	1	2	18	14	13
Austria	7	3	3	1	16	10	12
Rapid	7	2	3	2	11	8	9
Wacker	7	1	5	1	10	10	8
W Neustadt	7	2	2	3	11	20	8
Sturm	7	1	3	3	10	14	6
Admira	7	1	1	5	6	17	4
Wolfsberger	7	0	2	5	9	18	2

36-round season (18x2); bottom team will be relegated

BELGIUM

Regular season
Aug 17: Mechelen 1 Club Brugge 2; Lokeren 3 Genk 1; Charleroi 1 Kortrijk 2; Zulte Waregem 2 Mons 0; Gent 2 Lierse 1; Cercle Brugge 2 Oostende 0.
Aug 18: Standard 1 OH Leuven 0; Waasland-Beveren 0 Anderlecht 3.
Aug 24: OH Leuven 2 Lokeren 1; Kortrijk 1 Mechelen 2; Lierse 1 Waasland-Beveren 0.
Aug 25: Club Brugge 1 Gent 1; Anderlecht 5 Charleroi 2; Genk 1 Cercle Brugge 0; Oostende 1 Zulte Waregem 1; Mons 0 Standard 2.
Aug 31: Mechelen 0 Lierse 0; Gent 1 Mons 0; Lokeren 1 Oostende 0; Cercle Brugge 1 OH Leuven 1.
Sep 1: Standard 2 Kortrijk 0; Zulte Waregem 4 Anderlecht 3; Charleroi 1 Genk 1; Waasland-Beveren 1 Club Brugge 2.

BELGIUM – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Standard	6	6	0	0	12	0	18
Z Waregem	6	4	2	0	11	6	14
Club Brugge	6	4	2	0	10	5	14
Lokeren	6	4	1	1	13	9	13
Anderlecht	6	4	0	2	21	10	12
Gent	6	3	2	1	8	8	11
Genk	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Kortrijk	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Cercle Brugge	6	1	3	2	5	8	6
Mechelen	6	1	2	3	4	7	5
OH Leuven	6	1	2	3	5	9	5
Lierse	6	1	2	3	4	8	5
Charleroi	6	1	2	3	7	12	5
Waasland-B	6	0	3	3	3	8	3
Oostende	6	0	2	4	3	10	2
Mons	6	0	1	5	3	10	1

30-round regular season (15x2); top 6 will form championship group, 7th to 14th will enter Clinch League-place play-offs, 15th & 16th (bottom 2) will meet in the relegation play-off series (the loser going down automatically, the winner entering relegation play-offs)

CYPRUS

SUPER CUP

Aug 17 - Nicosia
APOEL 1 (Mario Sergio 35)
Apollon 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,558. **Ref:** Anastasiou

CZECH REPUBLIC

Aug 16: Mlada Boleslav 2 Olomouc 2.
Aug 17: Jablonec 5 Znojmo 5; Brno 0 Liberec 1; Pribram 4 Ostrava 0; Jihlava 1 Dukla 1; Plzen 0 Sparta 0.
Aug 18: Bohemians 1905 1 Slovacko 1; Slavia 0 Teplice 7.
Aug 23: Dukla 1 Mlada Boleslav 1; Sparta 4 Pribram 0.
Aug 24: Znojmo 0 Slavia 1; Slovacko 1 Plzen 3.
Aug 25: Teplice 4 Jihlava 2; Olomouc 0 Jablonec 1; Liberec 1 Bohemians 1905 0.
Aug 26: Ostrava 2 Brno 1.
Aug 30: Brno 0 Slovacko 2.
Aug 31: Pribram 0 Dukla 2; Sparta 4 Ostrava 1.
Sep 1: Jihlava 2 Slavia 1; Mlada Boleslav 1 Teplice 0; Bohemians 1905 2 Znojmo 0; Plzen 3 Olomouc 2.
Sep 2: Jablonec 0 Liberec 2.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Plzen	7	6	1	0	20	5	19
Sparta	7	6	1	0	19	5	19
Liberec	7	6	0	1	9	6	18
Teplice	7	4	2	1	18	8	14
M Boleslav	7	3	3	1	12	6	12
Jablonec	7	3	2	2	13	10	11
Dukla	7	2	3	2	10	6	9
Jihlava	7	2	1	4	11	13	7
Slovacko	7	2	1	4	9	12	7
Pribram	7	2	1	4	9	14	7
Bohemians	7	2	1	4	7	14	7
Slavia	7	2	1	4	7	15	7
Ostrava	7	2	1	4	6	19	7
Olomouc	7	1	2	4	10	16	5
Brno	7	1	1	5	8	11	4
Znojmo	7	0	3	4	6	14	3

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

DENMARK

Aug 16: Midtjylland 5 Brondby 2
Aug 17: Nordsjaelland 2 AaB 1.
Aug 18: Vestsjaelland 1 OB 1; SonderjyskE 0 Viborg 3; Copenhagen 1 AGF 1.
Aug 19: Randers 3 Esbjerg 2.
Aug 23: AGF 3 SonderjyskE 1.
Aug 25: OB 1 Nordsjaelland 0; Viborg 3 Esbjerg 1; Copenhagen 1 Vestsjaelland 1; Brondby 0 Randers 0.
Aug 26: AaB 1 Midtjylland 1.
Aug 30: OB 3 AGF 6.
Sep 1: Nordsjaelland 1 Vestsjaelland 2; Esbjerg 1 Midtjylland 1; Viborg 1 Copenhagen 4; AaB 2 Brondby 1.
Sep 2: Randers 0 SonderjyskE 2.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Midtjylland	7	5	2	0	15	6	17
AGF	7	4	1	2	15	13	13
AaB	7	3	2	2	9	8	11
Esbjerg	7	3	1	3	16	10	10
OB	7	2	4	1	11	11	10
Vestsjaelland	7	2	4	1	7	7	10
Viborg	7	2	3	2	14	14	9
Randers	7	2	3	2	10	11	9
SonderjyskE	7	2	2	3	6	9	8
Copenhagen	7	1	3	3	10	11	6
Nordsjaelland	7	1	2	4	7	13	5
Brondby	7	0	3	4	6	13	3

33-round season (11x3); bottom 2 will be relegated

ENGLAND

Saturday, August 17
Arsenal 1 (Giroud 6)
Aston Villa 3 (Benteke 22, pen 61, Lina 85)
Att: 60,003

Liverpool 1 (Sturridge 37)
Stoke 0 Att: 44,822

Norwich 2 (Whittaker 51, Van Wolfswinkel 71)
Everton 2 (Barkley 61, Coleman 65) Att: 26,824

Sunderland 0
Fulham 1 (Kasami 52) Att: 43,905

Swansea 1 (Bony 82)
Manchester United 4 (Van Persie 34, 72, Welbeck 36, 90+2) Att: 26,733

West Bromwich 0
Southampton 1 (Lambert pen 90) Att: 25,927

West Ham 2 (J Cole 13, Nolan 76)
Cardiff 0 Att: 34,977

Sunday, August 18
Chelsea 2 (Oscar 13, Lampard 25)
Hull 0 Att: 41,374

Crystal Palace 0
Tottenham 1 (Soldado pen 50) Att: 23,285

Monday, August 19
Manchester City 4 (Silva 6, Aguero 22, Toure 50, Nasri 75)
Newcastle 0 Att: 46,842

Wednesday, August 21
Chelsea 2 (Luna og 6, Ivanovic 73)
Aston Villa 1 (Benteke 45+3) Att: 41,527

Saturday, August 24
Aston Villa 0
Liverpool 1 (Sturridge 21) Att: 42,098

Everton 0
West Bromwich 0 Att: 36,410

Fulham 1 (Bent 77)
Arsenal 3 (Giroud 14, Podolski 41, 68)
Att: 25,622

Hull 1 (Brady pen 22)
Norwich 0 Att: 23,682

Newcastle 0
West Ham 0 Att: 49,622

Southampton 1 (Jose Fonte 85)
Sunderland 1 (Giaccherini 3) Att: 29,596

Stoke 2 (Adam 56, Shawcross 62)
Crystal Palace 1 (Chamakh 31) Att: 25,270

Sunday, August 25
Cardiff 3 (Gunnarsson 60, Campbell 79, 87)
Manchester City 2 (Dzeko 52, Negredo 90+2)
Att: 27,068

Tottenham 1 (Soldado pen 58)
Swansea 0 Att: 36,005

Monday, August 26
Manchester United 0
Chelsea 0 Att: 75,032

Saturday, August 31
Cardiff 0
Everton 0 Att: 27,344

Crystal Palace 3 (Gabbidon 9, Gayle pen 79, O'Keefe 90+2)
Sunderland 1 (Fletcher 64) Att: 22,671

Manchester City 2 (Negredo 65, Toure 90)
Hull 0 Att: 46,903

Newcastle 1 (Ben Arfa 86)
Fulham 0 Att: 46,402

Norwich 1 (Redmond 88)
Southampton 0 Att: 26,819

West Ham 0
Stoke 1 (Pennant 82) Att: 34,946

Sunday, September 1
Arsenal 1 (Giroud 23)
Tottenham 0 Att: 60,071

Liverpool 1 (Sturridge 4)
Manchester United 0 Att: 44,411

West Bromwich 0
Swansea 2 (Davies 22, Pablo 83) Att: 23,395

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	3	3	0	0	3	0	9
Chelsea	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Man City	3	2	0	1	8	3	6
Arsenal	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Stoke	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Tottenham	3	2	0	1	2	1	6
Man United	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
West Ham	3	1	1	1	2	1	4
Norwich	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Southampton	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Cardiff	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Newcastle	3	1	1	1	1	4	4
Aston Villa	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Crystal Palace	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Everton	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
Swansea	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Fulham	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Hull	3	1	0	2	1	4	3
Sunderland	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
West Brom	3	0	1	2	0	3	1

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
3 Christian Benteke (Aston Villa)
3 Olivier Giroud (Arsenal)
3 Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)

FAROE ISLANDS

FAROESE CUP

Final
Aug 24 - Torshavn (Torsvollur)
EB/Streymur 0
Vikingur 2 (Justinussen 14, Vatnhamar 19)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 2,884. **Ref:** Gaardbo

HOLLAND

Morning after for AZ

AZ finally took their place in the group stage of the Europa League, the day after the second leg of their play-off game against Atromitos started.

The game in Alkmaar was halted after 59 minutes for safety reasons following an electrical fire linked to the floodlighting system at the AZ Stadion.

When the game was stopped, AZ trailed 1-0 on the night but led 3-2 on aggregate. The match resumed the following morning, from the point of abandonment. The Greek visitors scored a second goal, through Thanasis Karagounis, to make it 3-3 on aggregate, but AZ held on for the final 15 minutes and qualified on away goals.

The morning after...AZ and Atromitos play out the final 31 minutes

ITALY

Top earner De Rossi

Roma midfielder Daniele De Rossi has been revealed as Serie A's highest wage earner, according to figures published by *La Gazzetta dello Sport*.

The 30-year-old is reported to command a net annual salary of €6.5m, which is €1m more than the league's second-highest earner, Napoli's Gonzalo Higuain, and €2m more than Francesco Totti, who is De Rossi's captain at Roma.

Carlos Tevez's goal in Juventus' 4-1 win over Lazio meant that it is now five years since his team has lost a game in which he has scored. In the last 46 top-flight games marked by a Tevez strike, his side have won 42 of them and drawn the other four.

Wealthy...De Rossi

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ports double figures

Portadown registered the country's biggest top-flight win for 47 years with their 11-0 thrashing of Ballinamallard United, who finished the game with nine men. "We've been playing like that all season but not taking our chances," said Portadown manager Ronnie McFall.

Abusive...Lech Poznan banner

POLAND

Racism problems

Lech Poznan and Piast Gliwice have both been punished with a partial suspension of their stadium for their next home game in Europe after racist behaviour by their fans. The incidents occurred at Europa League games against Zalgiris and Qarabag respectively.

FRANCE

Friday, August 16
Sochaux 1 (Boudebouz pen 4)
Lyon 3 (Benzia 35, Lacazette 43, Gourcuff 48)
Att: 13,857

Saturday, August 17
Bastia 2 (Bruno 76, Ba 79)
Valenciennes 0 Att: 15,429

Marseille 2 (Signac 16, Payet 67)
Evian TG 0 Att: 42,524

Nice 2 (Civilanich 20, Pied 50)
Rennes 1 (Oliveira 45+3)
Match played behind closed doors

Reims 2 (Albaek 7, Giombani 67)
Lille 1 (Basa 88) Att: 14,199

Saint-Etienne 1 (Lemoine 52)
Guingamp 0 Att: 26,461

Toulouse 1 (Ben Basat 45)
Bordeaux 1 (Diabate 43) Att: 13,111

Sunday, August 18
Lorient 2 (Aboubakar 38, Aladiere 61)
Nantes 1 (Veigneau 18) Att: 16,616

Monaco 4 (Falcao pen 18, Riviere 44, 57, 80)
Montpellier 1 (Montano 24) Att: 14,753

Paris Saint-Germain 1 (Cavani 86)
AC Ajaccio 1 (Pedretti 9) Att: 44,414

Friday, August 23
Monaco 0
Toulouse 0
Match played behind closed doors

Saturday, August 24
Bordeaux 1 (Salvet 32)
Bastia 0 Att: 15,240

Evian TG 1 (Berigaud 49)
Rennes 2 (Oliveira pen 11, 34) Att: 8,062

Guingamp 2 (Yatabare 16, 48)
Lorient 0 Att: 15,114

Lyon 0
Reims 1 (Odair Fortes 78) Att: 24,238

Montpellier 2 (Hilton 45+1, Tiene 90+4)
Sochaux 1 (Contout 43) Att: 12,877

Valenciennes 0
Marseille 1 (Signac 84) Att: 19,007

Sunday, August 25
AC Ajaccio 0
Nice 0 Att: 6,991

Lille 1 (Kalou pen 37)
Saint-Etienne 0 Att: 35,866

Nantes 1 (Alex og 52)
Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Cavani 24, Lavezzi 73)
Att: 35,867

Saturday, August 31
Bastia 2 (Koseru 43, Romaric 67)
Toulouse 1 (Braithwaite 57) Att: 13,669
Evian TG 2 (Berigaud 8, 33)
Lyon 1 (Ferri 49) Att: 12,869

Lorient 1 (Aboubakar 14)
Valenciennes 0 Att: 15,188

Paris Saint-Germain 2 (Rabiot 90+1, Ibrahimovic 90+3)
Guingamp 0 Att: 44,043

Reims 0
Nantes 0 Att: 15,304

Rennes 0
Lille 0 Att: 20,307

Sochaux 0
AC Ajaccio 0 Att: 10,294

Sunday, September 1
Marseille 1 (Lucas Mendes 44)
Monaco 2 (Falcao 47, Riviere 79) Att: 44,995

Nice 2 (Koloodziejczak 18, Eysseric 43)
Montpellier 2 (Camara 34, Tiene 52) Att: 14,962

Saint-Etienne 2 (Hamouma 7, Perrin 50)
Bordeaux 1 (Obraniak 90+1) Att: 26,091

FRANCE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	4	3	1	0	8	2	10
Marseille	4	3	0	1	7	3	9
Saint-Etienne	4	3	0	1	4	2	9
PSG	4	2	2	0	6	3	8
Rennes	4	2	1	1	5	4	7
Reims	4	2	1	1	4	3	7
Lille	4	2	1	1	3	2	7
Lyon	4	2	0	2	8	4	6
Bastia	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Lorient	4	2	0	2	3	4	6
Montpellier	4	1	2	1	8	8	5
Nice	4	1	2	1	4	7	5
Nantes	4	1	1	2	4	4	4
Evian TG	4	1	1	2	4	6	4
Bordeaux	4	1	1	2	3	5	4
Valenciennes	4	1	0	3	3	4	3
AC Ajaccio	4	0	3	1	1	2	3
Guingamp	4	1	0	3	3	6	3
Sochaux	4	0	2	2	3	6	2
Toulouse	4	0	2	2	2	8	2

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
5 Emmanuel Riviere (Monaco)

GERMANY

Saturday, August 17
Eintracht Frankfurt 0
Bayern Munich 1 (Mandzukic 13) Att: 51,500

Freiburg 1 (Freis 71)
Mainz 2 (Zimling 64, N Muller 68) Att: 23,100

Hamburg 1 (Van der Vaart pen 44)
Hoffenheim 5 (Roberto Firmino 5, 75, Volland 51, Modeste 67, 75) Att: 47,483

Monchengladbach 3 (Kruse 20, Kramer 53, Daems pen 66)
Hanover 0 Att: 46,089

Stuttgart 0
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schwaab og 42) Att: 40,800
Werder Bremen 1 (Ekici 23)
Augsburg 0 Att: 40,112

Wolfsburg 4 (Knoche 55, Vieirinha 61, Naldo 67, Kefkirche 90+1)
Schalke 0 Att: 28,405

Sunday, August 18
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Hofmann 75, Reus pen 86)
Eintracht Braunschweig 1 (Kratz 89) Att: 80,200

Nuremberg 2 (Drmic 40, Kiyotake 89)
Hertha Berlin 2 (Allagui 61, Romy pen 79)
Att: 37,068

Friday, August 23
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Lewandowski 55)
Werder Bremen 0 Att: 80,645

Saturday, August 24
Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Kossling pen 23, Sam 28, 61, Castro 72)
Monchengladbach 2 (Stranzl 54, Arango 57)
Att: 29,243

Bayern Munich 2 (Ribery 69, Robben 78)
Nuremberg 0 Att: 71,000

Hanover 2 (Huszti pen 15, Diouf 42)
Schalke 1 (Szalai 55) Att: 49,000

Hertha Berlin 1 (Ramos 74)
Hamburg 0 Att: 63,574

Hoffenheim 3 (Salihovic pen 10, Volland 25, Strobl 77)
Freiburg 3 (Sorg 13, Guede 29, Freis 65)
Att: 24,118

Mainz 2 (Chougo-Moting 61, N Muller 78)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 27,105

Sunday, August 25
Augsburg 2 (Altintop 6, Callsen-Bracker 38)
Stuttgart 1 (Ibisevic pen 42) Att: 30,030

Eintracht Braunschweig 0
Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Meier 52, Aigner 62)
Att: 23,325

Tuesday, August 27
Freiburg 1 (Hofler 86)
Bayern Munich 1 (Shaqiri 33) Att: 24,000

Saturday, August 31
Hamburg 4 (Van der Vaart 7, Zoua 17, Calhanoglu 80, 90+1)
Eintracht Braunschweig 0 Att: 54,956

Hanover 4 (Diouf 31, Sobiech 37, Ya Konan 80, Prib 82)
Mainz 1 (N Muller 12) Att: 38,800

Monchengladbach 4 (Arango 38, Raffael 53, Kruse 74, Herrmann 85)
Werder Bremen 1 (Nordtveit og 68) Att: 53,392

Nuremberg 0
Augsburg 1 (Vogt 84) Att: 37,239

Schalke 2 (Huger 30, Farfan pen 83)
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 61,973

Wolfsburg 2 (Olic 42, Diego pen 45+2)
Hertha Berlin 0 Att: 28,625

Sunday, September 1
Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Kadlec 36)
Borussia Dortmund 2 (Mkhitaryan 10, 56)
Att: 51,500

Stuttgart 6 (Rudiger 12, Ibisevic 19, 47, 63, Maxim 28, 55)
Hoffenheim 2 (Volland 26, R Firmino 87) Att: 42,459

GERMANY	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dortmund	4	4	0	0	9	2	12
Bayern	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
Hanover	4	3	0	1	8	5	9
Leverkusen	4	3	0	1	8	5	9
Mainz	4	3	0	1	8	7	9
Hertha	4	2	1	1	9	5	7
M'gladbach	4	2	0	2	10	5	6
Wolfsburg	4	2	0	2	6	4	6
Werder	4	2	0	2	3	5	6
Augsburg	4	2	0	2	3	6	6
Hoffenheim	4	1	2	1	12	12	5
Hamburg	4	1	1	2	6	9	4
Schalke	4	1	1	2	6	9	4
Stuttgart	4	1	0	3	9	8	3
Frankfurt	4	1	0	3	4	9	3
Freiburg	4	0	2	2	6	9	2
Nuremberg	4	0	2	2	4	7	2
Braunschweig	4	0	0	4	1	9	0

34-round season (17x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter relegation play-off

Leading goalscorers
6 Vedad Ibisevic (Stuttgart)
6 Nicolai Muller (Mainz)

GREECE

Aug 17: Atromitos 2 Ergotelis 2; Platanias 2 Veria 2; PAOK 3 Xanthi 0.
Aug 18: OFI 0 Panionios 0; Apollon 2 Aris 1; Asteras 3 Giannina 3; Panathinaikos 2 Panetolikos 0; Levadiakos 2 Panthrakikos 2.
Aug 19: Kalloni 0 Olympiakos 1.
Aug 24: Veria 2 OFI 0; Panetolikos 2 PAOK 0; Panionios 3 Panathinaikos 0.
Aug 25: Platanias 1 Asteras 1; Giannina 2 Apollon 0; Aris 0 Kalloni 2; Xanthi 1 Panthrakikos 0; Olympiakos 2 Atromitos 1.
Aug 26: Ergotelis 2 Levadiakos 0.
Aug 31: Kalloni 1 Giannina 0; Xanthi 0 Ergotelis 0; Panathinaikos 1 Veria 1.
Sep 1: Asteras 2 Apollon 0; PAOK 4 Panionios 1; Panthrakikos 2 Panetolikos 1; Levadiakos 0 Olympiakos 5.
Sep 2: Atromitos 2 Aris 0; OFI 0 Platanias 0.

GREECE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
PAOK	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Kalloni	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
Asteras	3	1	2	0	6	4	5
Veria	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Ergotelis	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Atromitos	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Giannina	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Panionios	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Panthrakikos	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Panathinaikos	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Xanthi	3	1	1	1	1	3	4
Platanias	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
Panetolikos	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Apollon	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
OFI	3	0	2	1	0	2	2
Levadiakos	3	0	1	2	2	3	1
Aris	3	0	0	3	1	6	0

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
3 Kostas Mitroglou (Olympiakos)
3 Miljan Mirdakovic (Veria)

HOLLAND

Aug 17: Cambuur 4 Groningen 1; PSV 3 Go Ahead Eagles 0; RKC 1 AZ 2; Roda JC 1 Vitesse 1; NEC 1 Zwolle 5.
Aug 18: Ajax 2 Feyenoord 1; Heerenveen 2 Heracles 4; NAC 1 Den Haag 2; Twente 6 Utrecht 0.
Aug 23: Heerenveen 3 Ajax 3.
Aug 24: NEC 2 RKC 2; Heracles 1 PSV 1; Den Haag 0 Roda JC 4; Zwolle 2 Cambuur 0.
Aug 25: Go Ahead Eagles 3 Groningen 3; Feyenoord 3 NAC 1; Vitesse 1 Twente 0; Utrecht 2 AZ 0.
Aug 30: NAC 1 NEC 1.
Aug 31: Twente 1 Heerenveen 1; Heracles 1 Den Haag 0; RKC 1 Go Ahead Eagles 4; PSV 0 Cambuur 0.
Sep 1: Groningen 1 Ajax 1; Zwolle 1 Utrecht 1; AZ 1 Vitesse 1; Feyenoord 4 Roda JC 0.

HOLLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zwolle	5	4	1	0	13	4	13
PSV	5	3	2	0	12	3	11
Twente	5	2	2	1	11	3	8
Ajax	5	2	2	1	11	8	8
Heerenveen	5	2	2	1	12	10	8
Groningen	5	2	2	1	11	9	8
Go Ahead	5	2	2	1	10	9	8
Vitesse	5	2	2	1	8	7	8
Heracles	5	2	1	2	8	9	7
Roda JC	5	2	1	2	7	8	7
AZ	5	2	1	2	8	10	7
Feyenoord	5	2	0	3	10	9	6
Cambuur	5	1	2	2	4	5	5
RKC	5	1	2	2	8	10	5
Utrecht	5	1	2	2	4	10	5
Den Haag	5	1	0	4	5	11	3
NAC	5	0	2	3	3	8	2
NEC	5	0	2	3	5	17	2

34-round season (17x2); bottom team will be relegated, 2nd & 3rd bottom will enter relegation play-offs

Leading goalscorers
6 Alfred Finnbogason (Heerenveen)
6 Graziano Pelle (Feyenoord)
4 Marnix Kolder (Go Ahead Eagles)

ICELAND

ICELANDIC CUP

Final
Aug 17 - Reykjavik (Laugardalsvollur)
Fram 3 (Fridjonsson 53, Ormarsson 64, 88)
Stjarnan 3 (Bjornsson pen 5, 72, Gunnarsson 38)
Aet. **HT:** 0-2. **90mins:** 3-3. **Att:** 4,318.
Ref: Jakobsson
Fram 3-1 on pens

ITALY

Saturday, August 24
Sampdoria 0
Juventus 1 (Tevez 58) Att: 28,277

Verona 2 (Toni 30, 53)
Milan 1 (Poli 14) Att: 25,164

Sunday, August 25
Cagliari 2 (Nainggolan 28, Cabrera 63)
Atalanta 1 (Stendardo 27) Att: 500
Match played in Trieste

Internazionale 2 (Nagatomo 75, Palacio 90+2)
Genoa 0 Att: 42,797

Lazio 2 (Hernanes 13, Candreva pen 16)
Udinese 1 (Muriel 60) Att: 24,858

Livorno 0
Roma 2 (De Rossi 65, Florenzi 67) Att: 12,940

Napoli 3 (Callejon 32, Hamsik 45+2, 63)
Bologna 0 Att: 39,632

Parma 0
Chievo 0 Att: 11,276

Torino 2 (Brighi 40, Cerci 63)
Sassuolo 0 Att: 15,000

Monday, August 26
Fiorentina 2 (Rossi 14, Pizarro 28)
Catania 1 (Barrientos 22) Att: 32,845

Saturday, August 31
Chievo 2 (Paloschi 24, 40)
Napoli 4 (Hamsik 13, 64, Callejon 27, Higuain 70)
Att: 12,000

Juventus 4 (Vidal 15, 26, Vucinic 49, Tevez 81)
Lazio 1 (Klose 28) Att: 37,819

Sunday, September 1
Atalanta 2 (Stendardo 57, Lucchini 81)
Torino 0 Att: 12,745

Bologna 2 (Moscardelli 41, Kone 64)
Sampdoria 2 (Eder 25, Gabbiadini 71) Att: 16,509

Catania 0
Internazionale 3 (Palacio 19, Nagatomo 56, Alvarez 80) Att: 18,821

Genoa 2 (Giardino 54, Lodi pen 60)
Fiorentina 5 (Aquilani 10, Rossi 14, 55, Gomez 41, pen 90+3) Att: 23,000

Milan 3 (Robinho 8, Mexes 30, Balotelli 62)
Cagliari 1 (Sau 33) Att: 30,471

Roma 3 (Cacciatore og 56, Pjanic 59, Ljajic 66)
Verona 0 Att: 25,000

Sassuolo 1 (Zaza 66)
Livorno 4 (Greco 43, Rosati og 69, Paulinho 74, Emeghara pen 89) Att: 9,929

Udinese 3 (Badu 11, Heurtaux 72, Muriel pen 89)
Parma 1 (Cassano 83) Att: 9,750

ITALY	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Napoli	2	2	0	0	7	2	6
Inter	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Roma	2	2	0	0	5	0	6
Fiorentina	2	2	0	0	7	3	6
Juventus	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Livorno	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Milan	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Udinese	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Atalanta	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Torino	2	1	0	1	2	2	3
Cagliari	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Lazio	2	1	0	1	3	5	3
Verona	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
Sampdoria	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Chievo	2	0	1	1	2	4	1
Parma	2	0	1	1	1	3	1
Bologna	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Catania	2	0	0	2	1	5	0
Genoa	2	0	0	2	2	7	0
Sassuolo	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers
4 Marek Hamsik (Napoli)
3 Giuseppe Rossi (Fiorentina)

SUPER CUP

Aug 18 - Rome
Juventus 4 (Pogba 24, Chiellini 52, Lichtsteiner 54, Tevez 56)
Lazio 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 57,000. **Ref:** Rocchi

NORWAY

Aug 17: Molde 1 Odd 1; Rosenborg 0 Valerenga 0.
Aug 18: Start 1 Haugesund 2; Honefoss 0 Sandnes Ulf 1; Sarpsborg 0 Sogndal 1; Tromso 1 Aalesund 2; Viking 3 Brann 2.
Aug 19: Lillestrom 1 Stromsgodset 1.
Aug 24: Sogndal 1 Viking 0; Odd 1 Brann 3.
Aug 25: Aalesund 1 Start 1; Stromsgodset 5 Molde 2; Valerenga 1 Lillestrom 1; Haugesund 1 Tromso 0; Honefoss 3 Sarpsborg 1; Sandnes Ulf 2 Rosenborg 3.
Aug 30: Brann 1 Sogndal 0.
Aug 31: Lillestrom 1 Odd 0; Rosenborg 2 Aalesund 1.
Sep 1: Start 7 Sandnes Ulf 0; Viking 1 Stromsgodset 0; Tromso 1 Honefoss 1; Sarpsborg 2 Haugesund 1; Molde 4 Valerenga 0.

NORWAY	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	22	14	6	2	41	20	48
Stromsgodset	22	13	4	5	48	23	43
Aalesund	22	11	5	6	46	32	38
Viking	22	10	7	5	29	22	37
Haugesund	22	11	3	8	29	28	36
Brann	22	10	3	9	35	33	33
Sogndal	22	7	8	7	27	31	29
Molde	22	7	7	8	36	33	28
Lillestrom	22	7	7	8	27	30	28
Valerenga	22	7	6	9	30	38	27
Odd	22	7	5	10	25	25	26
Sandnes Ulf	22	7	4	11	25	43	25
Tromso	22	5	7	10	31	33	22
Start	22	5	7	10	34	41	22
Honefoss	22	4	6	10	25	38	20
Sarpsborg	22	5	5	12	28	47	20

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter relegation play-off

POLAND

Regular season
Aug 23: Zaglebie 0 Cracovia 1; Gornik 2 Ruch 2.
Aug 24: Zawisza 2 Podbeskidzie 2; Jagiellonia 2 Pogon 3; Legia 0 Lechia 1.
Aug 25: Slask 3 Widzew 1; Wisla 2 Lech 0.
Aug 26: Korona 2 Piast 0.
Aug 30: Ruch 0 Zaglebie 2; Lechia 1 Gornik 1.
Aug 31: Widzew 1 Jagiellonia 1; Pogon 0 Wisla 0; Cracovia 0 Legia 1.
Sep 1: Piast 1 Slask 1; Lech 3 Zawisza 2.
Sep 2: Podbeskidzie 1 Korona 0.

POLAND – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Legia	6	4	0	2	14	4	12
Gornik	6	3	3	0	10	5	12
Lechia	6	3	3	0	10	5	12
Wisla	6	2	4	0	6	3	10
Lech	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Pogon	6	2	3	1	5	8	9
Jagiellonia	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
Piast	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
Slask	6	1	4	1	8	7	7
Cracovia	6	2	1	3	7	9	7
Widzew	6	2	1	3	7	14	7
Ruch	6	1	3	2	7	9	6
Podbeskidzie	6	1	3	2	6	10	6
Zaglebie	6	1	2	3	3	5	5
Korona	6	1	1	4	5	8	4
Zawisza	6	0	3	3	7	10	3

30-round regular season (15x2); top 8 will form championship group, bottom 8 will form relegation group (from which the bottom 2 will go down)

PORTUGAL

Aug 16: Pacos de Ferreira 0 Braga 2.
Aug 17: Estoril 3 Nacional 1; Guimaraes 2 Olhanense 0.
Aug 18: Sporting 5 Arouca 1; Belenenses 0 Rio Ave 3; Gil Vicente 2 Academica 0; Maritimo 2 Benfica 1; Setubal 1 Porto 3.
Aug 24: Olhanense 1 Pacos de Ferreira 0; Academica 0 Sporting 4.
Aug 25: Rio Ave 2 Setubal 0; Nacional 1 Guimaraes 1; Benfica 2 Gil Vicente 1; Arouca 1 Estoril 2; Porto 3 Maritimo 0.
Aug 26: Braga 2 Belenenses 1.
Aug 31: Guimaraes 1 Setubal 4; Sporting 1 Benfica 1.
Sep 1: Arouca 1 Rio Ave 0; Maritimo 1 Olhanense 1; Belenenses 2 Nacional 3; Pacos de Ferreira 0 Porto 1; Gil Vicente 1 Braga 0.
Sep 2: Estoril 1 Academica 1.

PORTUGAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Porto	3	3	0	0	7	1	9
Sporting	3	2	1	0	10	2	7
Estoril	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
Rio Ave	3	2	0	1	5	1	6
Braga	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Gil Vicente	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Benfica	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Nacional	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
Guimaraes	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Olhanense	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
Maritimo	3	1	1	1	3	5	4
Setubal	3	1	0	2	5	6	3
Arouca	3	1	0	2	3	7	3
Academica	3	0	1	2	1	7	1
Pacos Ferreira	3	0	0	3	0	4	0
Belenenses	3	0	0	3	3	8	0

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

SAN MARINO

Not tired of winning

Tre Penne won the Sammarinese Super Cup for the first time, beating La Fiorita 2-1 despite having 10 men for almost an hour.

Enrico Cibelli scored both goals for the reigning league champions, who had Moris Tamburini sent off, while Andy Selva managed a consolation goal for the cup holders.

"You never get tired of winning trophies," said Tre Penne coach Marco Protti.

Happy traveller...Messi

SPAIN

Messi's away century

Lionel Messi's hat-trick in Barcelona's 3-2 win at Valencia saw the Argentinian become the first player to score 100 goals away from home in La Liga.

SWITZERLAND

Passport problems

St Gallen midfielder Kristian Nushi, who holds a Kosovan passport, missed the 4-2 win away to Spartak Moscow in the Europa League because he was not granted a Russian visa.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008 but is not recognised by Russia.

Stayed at home...Nushi

TURKEY

Biggest-ever deal

Besiktas have signed Turkey's biggest-ever sports sponsorship deal, said to be worth US$145million, part of which will see the club name their new stadium the Vodafone Arena.

The new 42,000-seat ground, which will be built on the location of their old Inonu Stadium, is not expected to be ready until next year. They are sharing Kasimpasa's Recep Tayyip Erdogan Stadium in Istanbul this season.

Enes Unal of Bursaspor became the youngest-ever goalscorer in Turkey's top flight when he grabbed the equaliser in his side's 1-1 draw against Galatasaray. He scored three months and 15 days before his 16th birthday.

Young star...Enes

ARGENTINA

Player dies after game

Hector Sanabria, a 28-year-old striker with fourth-tier side Deportivo Laferrere, collapsed during a game against General Lamadrid and died in hospital.

COLOMBIA

Injury-time double

Trailing 2-0 at the end of 90 minutes, Once Caldas staged a late comeback to draw 2-2 at home to La Equidad in the Primera A.

After Miguel Borja had scored twice for the visiting side, Once Caldas substitute Martin Minadevino found the net in the first minute of injury time and then Geisson Perea scored an own goal with the last kick of the game.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Aug 16: Dundalk 2 Sligo 0; Bray 1 Cork 2; St Patrick's 1 Shelbourne 0; Bohemians 1 Shamrock 0; Derry 0 Drogheda 2; Limerick 1 UCD 3.
Aug 30: Cork 4 Derry 1; Drogheda 2 Bray 0; St Patrick's 1 Bohemians 1; UCD 0 Dundalk 2; Shelbourne 1 Shamrock 2.
Aug 31: Sligo 2 Limerick 0.
Sep 3: Derry 0 St Patrick's 1; Drogheda 1 Sligo 1.
Sep 7: Shamrock 2 Cork 1; Bohemians 0 Sligo 2; Limerick 0 St Patrick's 0.
Sep 8: Bray 1 UCD 1; Dundalk 1 Drogheda 0.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
St Patrick's	27	17	7	3	43	13	58
Dundalk	27	18	4	5	44	25	58
Sligo	27	15	8	4	43	18	53
Derry	26	14	3	9	45	32	45
Shamrock	27	10	12	5	32	22	42
Drogheda	27	7	12	8	36	34	33
Cork	27	9	6	12	33	39	33
Limerick	27	7	9	11	32	38	30
UCD	27	7	5	15	40	59	26
Bohemians	27	5	7	15	21	43	22
Bray	27	5	6	16	30	56	21
Shelbourne	26	6	5	16	18	38	20

33-round season (11x3); bottom team will be relegated. 2nd bottom will enter relegation play-off.

ROMANIA

Aug 16: Otelul 1 Brasov 0; Poli 0 Botosani 1; Corona 1 Dinamo 1.
Aug 17: Pandurii 1 Astra 3; Petrolul 1 Ceahlaul 1; Steaua 3 CFR 0.
Aug 18: Vitorul 0 Gaz Metan 0.
Aug 19: Universitatea 0 Concordia 3; Vaslui 1 Sageata 0.
Aug 23: Sageata 3 Vitorul 1; Brasov 2 Poli 1; Dinamo 6 Universitatea 0.
Aug 24: Ceahlaul 2 Otelul 0; Gaz Metan 2 Steaua 2.
Aug 25: Botosani 1 Vaslui 0; Concordia 1 Pandurii 5; Astra 1 Petrolul 2.
Aug 26: CFR 1 Corona 0.

ROMANIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Botosani	6	4	2	0	7	3	14
Astra	5	4	0	1	16	6	12
Petrolul	6	3	3	0	7	4	12
Ceahlaul	6	3	2	1	9	4	11
Steaua	4	3	1	0	9	4	10
Pandurii	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
Poli	6	3	1	2	9	7	10
Otelul	6	3	0	3	6	7	9
Dinamo	6	2	2	2	10	5	8
Sageata	6	2	2	2	7	6	8
CFR	6	2	2	2	5	10	8
Vaslui	5	2	1	2	6	4	7
Concordia	3	2	0	1	5	5	6
Brasov	6	1	2	3	5	8	5
Gaz Metan	6	0	3	3	5	8	3
Vitorul	5	0	2	3	2	9	2
Corona	6	0	1	5	3	12	1
Universitatea	6	0	1	5	3	16	1

34-round season (17x2); bottom 4 will be relegated.

RUSSIA

Aug 17: Ural 0 Amkar 0; Zenit 3 Anzhi 0; Terek 0 Lokomotiv 1.
Aug 18: CSKA 1 Kuban 0; Spartak 0 Rubin 0; Krylia Sovetov 1 Tom 0; Krasnodar 1 Dynamo 1.
Aug 19: Rostov 4 Volga 0.
Aug 24: Dynamo 1 Zenit 1; Tom 1 CSKA 2; Volga 1 Terek 0; Anzhi 1 Krasnodar 2.
Aug 25: Rubin 1 Krylia Sovetov 1; Kuban 3 Ural 2.
Aug 26: Amkar 2 Spartak 1; Lokomotiv 5 Rostov 0.
Aug 30: CSKA 2 Amkar 1.
Aug 31: Terek 1 Anzhi 1; Krasnodar 3 Volga 0.
Sep 1: Ural 0 Rubin 3; Zenit 2 Lokomotiv 1; Spartak 2 Tom 1; Krylia Sovetov 0 Kuban 0; Dynamo 1 Rostov 1.

RUSSIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	7	5	2	0	11	6	17
Spartak	7	4	2	1	13	7	14
Zenit	7	4	2	1	13	7	14
Rostov	7	4	2	1	13	8	14
Lokomotiv	7	4	1	2	15	8	13
Krasnodar	7	3	2	2	12	10	11
Rubin	7	2	5	0	7	3	11
Kuban	7	2	4	1	9	8	10
Dynamo	7	2	4	1	8	10	10
Amkar	7	2	3	2	7	8	9
Volga	7	2	1	4	7	15	7
Krylia Sovetov	7	1	4	2	5	6	7
Ural	7	1	2	4	7	13	5
Anzhi	7	0	3	4	6	12	3
Terek	7	0	3	4	3	7	3
Tom	7	0	0	7	4	14	0

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated. 3rd & 4th bottom will enter relegation play-offs.

SCOTLAND

Regular season
Aug 16: Partick 1 Hearts 1.
Aug 17: Aberdeen 0 Celtic 2; Inverness 2 Motherwell 0; Hibernian 1 Dundee United 1; St Mirren 1 Kilmarnock 1; St Johnstone 4 Ross County 0.
Aug 24: Celtic 2 Inverness 2; Motherwell 1 Partick 0; Ross County 3 St Mirren 0; Kilmarnock 1 Hibernian 2; Dundee United 4 St Johnstone 0; Hearts 2 Aberdeen 1.
Aug 31: Dundee United 0 Celtic 1; Aberdeen 0 St Johnstone 0; Hibernian 0 Ross County 0; Inverness 2 Hearts 0; St Mirren 1 Partick 2; Motherwell 2 Kilmarnock 1.

SCOTLAND – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inverness	5	4	1	0	10	2	13
Celtic	4	3	1	0	7	3	10
Motherwell	5	3	0	2	5	6	9
Partick	5	2	2	1	6	4	8
St Johnstone	5	2	2	1	5	4	8
Aberdeen	5	2	1	2	6	6	7
Dundee Utd	5	1	2	2	5	3	5
Hibernian	5	1	2	2	3	4	5
Ross County	5	1	1	3	5	9	4
Kilmarnock	5	0	2	3	4	7	2
St Mirren	4	0	1	3	2	8	1
Hearts[1]	5	2	1	2	4	6	-8

33-round regular season (11x3); top 6 will form championship group, bottom 6 will form relegation group from which the bottom team will go down and the 2nd bottom will enter relegation play-offs.
[1]15pts deducted for going into administration

SPAIN

Saturday, August 17
Real Sociedad 2 (Vela 42, Seferovic 70)
Getafe 0 Att: 24,466

Valencia 1 (Ricardo Costa 64)
Malaga 0 Att: 40,000

Valladolid 1 (Ebert 31)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Susana 28, Munain 50)
Att: 20,000

Sunday, August 18
Barcelona 7 (Sanchez 3, Messi 12, pen 42, Daniel Alves 24, Pedro 26, 73, Xavi 45)
Levante 0 Att: 73,812

Osasuna 1 (Punal 58)
Granada 2 (El Arabi 38, Yebda 45) Att: 13,427

Real Madrid 2 (Benzema 26, Isco 86)
Betis 1 (Jorge Molina 14) Att: 76,870

Sevilla 1 (Perotti 37)
Atletico Madrid 3 (Diego Costa 35, 79, Rodriguez 90+2) Att: 35,000

Monday, August 19
Almeria 2 (Rodri 39, 74)
Villarreal 3 (Dubarbier og 65, Dos Santos 83, Jonathan 86) Att: 10,036

Celta Vigo 2 (Alex Lopez 42, Charles 46)
Espanyol 2 (Victor Sanchez 53, Thievy 75)
Att: 21,672

Rayo Vallecano 3 (Bueno 40, 74, Perea 44)
Elche 0 Att: 9,000

Friday, August 23
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Arribas og 31, De Marcos 82)
Osasuna 0 Att: 20,000

Getafe 2 (Lafita 32, Diego Castro pen 65)
Almeria 2 (Rodri 30, Soriano 37) Att: 4,000

Saturday, August 24
Elche 1 (Coro 2)
Real Sociedad 1 (Vela 74) Att: 23,859

Espanyol 3 (David Lopez 32, Shuani 47, Thievy 89)
Valencia 1 (Helder Postiga 10) Att: 18,121

Villarreal 2 (Dos Santos pen 38, Cani 84)
Valladolid 1 (Javi Guerra 4) Att: 13,000

Sunday, August 25
Atletico Madrid 5 (Raul Garcia 17, 90, Diego Costa 20, Arda 35, Tiago 53)
Rayo Vallecano 0 Att: 41,600

Betis 1 (Ruben Castro 90)
Celta Vigo 2 (Charles 67, Nolito 74) Att: 29,633

Levante 0
Sevilla 0 Att: 12,600

Malaga 0
Barcelona 1 (Adriano 44) Att: 30,500

Monday, August 26
Granada 0
Real Madrid 1 (Benzema 10) Att: 16,800

Friday, August 30
Almeria 2 (Soriano 10, Verza pen 45)
Elche 2 (Albacar pen 32, Boakye 90+4) Att: 9,781

Rayo Vallecano 1 (Larrivey 79)
Levante 2 (Ruben Garcia 26, Ivanschitz 90+4)
Att: 8,890

Saturday, August 31
Celta Vigo 1 (Rafinha 29)
Granada 1 (Piti 62) Att: 20,457

Osasuna 0
Villarreal 3 (Perbet 22, Aquino 30, Uche 75)
Att: 12,474

Valladolid 1 (Marc Valiente 47)
Getafe 0 Att: 12,216

Sunday, September 1
Espanyol 0
Betis 0 Att: 23,810

Real Madrid 3 (Isco 26, 72, Cristiano Ronaldo 45)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ibai Gomez 78) Att: 72,231

Real Sociedad 1 (Xabi Prieto 69)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Villa 27, Koke 56) Att: 27,604

Sevilla 2 (Gameiro 44, 71)
Malaga 2 (Morales 40, Santa Cruz 68) Att: 35,000

Valencia 2 (Helder Postiga 45, 45+2)
Barcelona 3 (Messi 11, 39, 41) Att: 45,000

SPAIN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	3	3	0	0	11	2	9
Atletico	3	3	0	0	10	2	9
Villarreal	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Real Madrid	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Athletic	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Espanyol	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Celta	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
Sociedad	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Granada	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Levante	3	1	1	1	2	6	4
Valladolid	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Valencia	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Rayo	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
Almeria	3	0	2	1	6	7	2
Sevilla	3	0	2	1	3	5	2
Elche	3	0	2	1	3	6	2
Betis	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Malaga	3	0	1	2	2	4	1
Getafe	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
Osasuna	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated.

Leading goalscorer
5 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)

SUPER CUP

1st leg
Aug 21
Atletico Madrid 1 (Villa 12)
Barcelona 1 (Neymar 66)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 54,000. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco

2nd leg
Aug 28
Barcelona 0
Atletico Madrid 0
Att: 74,536. **Ref:** Fernandez Borbalan
Agg 1-1; Barcelona on away goals
Sent off: Filipe Luis 81min, Arda 90+1min (from the bench) (both Atletico)

SWEDEN

Aug 16: Oster 1 Syrianska 0.
Aug 17: Gothenburg 3 Elfsborg 1; Norrkoping 2 Brommapojkarna 1.
Aug 18: Djurgarden 1 Hacken 1; Halmstad 2 Gefle 2; Kalmar 1 Malmo 4.
Aug 19: AIK 3 Alvidaberg 2; Mjallby 4 Helsingborg 3.
Aug 23: Norrkoping 2 Djurgarden 3.
Aug 25: Elfsborg 2 Oster 4; Halmstad 1 AIK 0; Gefle 1 Helsingborg 2; Malmo 3 Gothenburg 1.
Aug 26: Hacken 1 Norrkoping 0; Alvidaberg 0 Kalmar 0; Brommapojkarna 2 Mjallby 0; Syrianska 1 Djurgarden 3.
Aug 30: Helsingborg 4 Brommapojkarna 2.
Aug 31: AIK 3 Gefle 0.
Sep 1: Norrkoping 6 Syrianska 1; Oster 1 Malmo 1; Gothenburg 3 Alvidaberg 0; Djurgarden 1 Elfsborg 2; Kalmar 1 Halmstad 0; Mjallby 1 Hacken 1.

SWEDEN	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo	22	13	6	3	43	24	45
Helsingborg	22	13	5	4	49	22	44
AIK	22	12	5	5	37	23	41
Gothenburg	22	12	5	5	37	23	41
Kalmar	22	9	8	5	24	19	35
Elfsborg	22	9	7	6	37	26	34
Norrkoping	22	9	5	8	37	33	32
Mjallby	22	8	5	9	37	35	29
Alvidaberg	22	8	5	9	25	26	29
Djurgarden	22	7	5	10	22	37	26
Oster	22	6	7	9	22	28	25
Hacken	22	7	4	11	25	33	25
Gefle	22	4	10	8	25	35	22
Halmstad	22	4	8	9	20	31	21
Brommapojkarna	22	5	6	11	26	42	21
Syrianska	22	2	4	16	16	45	10

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 1st bottom will enter relegation play-off.

SWITZERLAND

Aug 24: Lausanne 1 Aarau 2; Lucerne 1 Basle 1.
Aug 25: Young Boys 1 Grasshopper 2; Sion 0 Thun 0; Zurich 0 St Gallen 0.
Aug 31: Aarau 0 Sion 1.
Sep 1: Thun 4 Lausanne 1; St Gallen 4 Lucerne 1; Basle 2 Young Boys 1.

SWITZERLAND	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Young Boys	7	5	0	2	17	8	15
Grasshopper	6	3	3	0	9	4	12
Basle	7	3	3	1	11	7	12
St Gallen	7	3	2	2	10	7	11
Lucerne	7	3	2	2	11	12	11
Thun	7	2	3	2	14	12	9
Zurich	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
Aarau	7	2	1	4	11	17	7
Sion	7	1	3	3	1	4	6
Lausanne	7	0	1	6	3	15	1

36-round season (18x2); bottom team will be relegated.

TURKEY

Aug 18: Antalyaspor 0 Kayseri Erciyesspor 0.
Aug 19: Rizespor 1 Genclerbirligi 0; Karabukspor 2 Kasimpasa 0; Konyaspor 3 Fenerbahce 2.
Aug 18: Eskisehirspor 2 Bursaspor 0; Akhisar 3 Elazigspor 1; Besiktas 2 Trabzonspor 0.
Aug 19: Kayserispor 1 Sivaspor 0; Galatasaray 2 Gaziantepspor 1.
Aug 22: Genclerbirligi 3 Akhisar 0.
Aug 24: Kasimpasa 3 Kayserispor 1; Gaziantepspor 0 Antalyaspor 0; Fenerbahce 1 Eskisehirspor 0.
Aug 25: Sivaspor 2 Konyaspor 0; Elazigspor 2 Karabukspor 2; Bursaspor 1 Galatasaray 1.
Aug 26: Trabzonspor 2 Rizespor 1; Kayseri Erciyesspor 2 Besiktas 4.
Aug 30: Konyaspor 1 Kasimpasa 2; Eskisehirspor 0 Galatasaray 0.
Aug 31: Kayserispor 1 Elazigspor 3; Antalyaspor 1 Bursaspor 2; Fenerbahce 5 Sivaspor 2.
Sep 1: Besiktas 2 Gaziantepspor 0; Karabukspor 1 Genclerbirligi 0; Rizespor 2 Kayseri Erciyesspor 1; Akhisar 3 Trabzonspor 0.

TURKEY	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	3	3	0	0	8	2	9
Karabukspor	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Fenerbahce	3	2	0	1	8	5	6
Akhisar	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Kasimpasa	3	2	0	1	5	4	6
Rizespor	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Galatasaray	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Eskisehirspor	3	1	1	1	2	1	4
Elazigspor	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
Bursaspor	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Genclerbirligi	3	1	0	2	3	2	3
Konyaspor	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Sivaspor	3	1	0	2	4	6	3
Kayserispor	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Trabzonspor	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Antalyaspor	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
K Erciyesspor	3	0	1	2	3	6	1
Gaziantepspor	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated.

UKRAINE

Aug 16: Chornomorets 1 Arsenal 0.
Aug 17: Illichivets 3 Metalurh Donetsk 0; Sevastopol 1 Dnipro 1; Hoverla 0 Metalist 2.
Aug 18: Zorya 1 Vorskla 2; Shakhtar 2 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0; Dynamo 2 Tavriya 0.
Aug 19: Volyn 1 Karpaty 1.
Aug 23: Metalurh Donetsk 2 Zorya 0.
Aug 24: Vorskla 3 Volyn 3; Arsenal 1 Illichivets 2; Metalist 3 Sevastopol 1.
Aug 25: Karpaty 1 Hoverla 0; Metalurh Zaporizhya 1 Dynamo 2; Dnipro 3 Shakhtar 1; Tavriya 1 Chornomorets 2.
Aug 30: Tavriya 3 Metalurh Zaporizhya 1.
Aug 31: Hoverla 1 Vorskla 2; Shakhtar 1 Metalist 1; Sevastopol 1 Karpaty 0.
Sep 1: Zorya 4 Arsenal 0; Volyn 1 Metalurh Donetsk 0; Chornomorets 1 Illichivets 0; Dynamo 1 Dnipro 1.

UKRAINE	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Metalist	8	6	2	0	17	5	20
Shakhtar	8	6	1	1	17	6	19
Dnipro	8	5	2	1	15	7	17
Chornomorets	8	5	2	1	9	5	17
Vorskla	8	4	3	1	13	9	15
Dynamo	8	4	2	2	12	9	14
Zorya	8	3	3	2	12	7	12
Illichivets	8	3	1	4	7	8	10
Metalurh D	8	3	1	4	7	8	10
Sevastopol	8	2	3	3	8	12	9
Volyn	8	2	3	3	8	15	9
Karpaty	8	1	4	3	4	8	7
Metalurh Z	8	1	3	4	8	11	6
Hoverla	8	1	1	6	6	12	4
Arsenal	8	1	1	6	5	15	4
Tavriya	8	1	0	7	5	16	3

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated.

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

2nd round

1st legs - Aug 13-22; 2nd legs - Aug 27-Sep 5
Belgrano (Arg)* v Velez Sarsfield (Arg)*
1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
Criciuma (Bra)* v Ponte Preta (Bra)*
1-2, 0-0 (agg 1-2)
Deportivo Pasto (Col) v Colo Colo (Chi)
1-0, 2-0 (agg 3-0)
Guarani (Par) v Atletico Nacional (Col)
0-2, 0-0 (agg 0-2)
Itagui (Col) v River Plate (Uru)
1-0, 0-0 (agg 1-0)
La Equidad (Col) v Cobreloa (Chi)
0-0, 1-1 (agg 1-1, La Equidad on away goals)
LDU Loja (Ecu) v Nacional (Par)
0-0, 1-0 (agg 1-0)
Libertad (Par) v Mineiro de Guayana (Ven)
2-0, 2-1 (agg 4-1)
Portuguesa (Bra)* v Bahia (Bra)*
1-2, 0-0 (agg 1-2)
Racing (Arg)* v Lanus (Arg)*
1-2, 0-2 (agg 1-4)
San Lorenzo (Arg)* v River Plate (Arg)*
0-1, 0-0 (agg 0-1)
Sport Recife (Bra)* v Nautico (Bra)*
2-0, 0-2 (agg 2-2, Sport Recife 3-1 on pens)
Universidad Catolica (Chi) v Emelec (Ecu)
4-0, 3-2 (agg 7-2)
Universidad de Chile (Chi) v Independiente del Valle (Ecu) 1-1, 3-1 (agg 4-2)
Vitoria (Bra)* v Coritiba (Bra)*
1-0, 0-1 (agg 1-1, Coritiba 4-3 on pens)
*Team entered at this stage

Bye to 3rd round: Sao Paulo (Bra; holders)

3rd round draw

Atletico Nacional v Bahia
Coritiba v Itagui
La Equidad v Velez Sarsfield
Lanus v Universidad de Chile
LDU Loja v River Plate (Arg)
Libertad v Sport Recife
Ponte Preta v Deportivo Pasto
Sao Paulo v Universidad Catolica
1st legs - Sep 18-26; 2nd legs - tba

ARGENTINA

1st tournament

Aug 12: Boca 2 Newell's 3.
Aug 16: Arsenal 3 Olimpo 1; Colon 1 Quilmes 0.
Aug 17: Gimnasia 3 Rosario 1; San Lorenzo 0 Argentinos 3.
Aug 18: Tigre 3 Racing 1; Newell's 0 Belgrano 0; Boca 2 Rafaela 1; Godoy Cruz 0 River Plate 0.
Aug 19: All Boys 1 Velez 1; Lanus 1 Estudiantes 1.
Aug 23: Belgrano 1 Gimnasia 2; Rafaela 0 Newell's 2; Racing 0 Arsenal 2.
Aug 24: Velez 0 Lanus 0; Argentinos 1 Tigre 0; Rosario 1 Godoy Cruz 0.
Aug 25: Olimpo 1 All Boys 1; River Plate 1 Colon 2; Estudiantes 2 Boca 0.
Aug 26: Quilmes 3 San Lorenzo 2.
Aug 27: Newell's 3 Gimnasia 0.
Aug 31: Newell's 1 Estudiantes 1; All Boys 1 Racing 0; Tigre 0 Quilmes 1.
Sep 1: Gimnasia 0 Godoy Cruz 0; San Lorenzo 1 River Plate 0; Colon 2 Rosario 1; Boca 2 Velez 1.
Sep 2: Arsenal 0 Argentinos 0; Belgrano 3 Rafaela 2; Lanus 3 Olimpo 0.
Sep 6: Velez 3 Newell's 0.
Sep 7: Estudiantes 1 Belgrano 1; Godoy Cruz 1 Colon 0; Argentinos 1 All Boys 0; Rafaela 2 Gimnasia 1; Racing 1 Lanus 1.
Sep 8: Rosario 0 San Lorenzo 2; Quilmes 0 Arsenal 1; River Plate 3 Tigre 0; Olimpo 3 Boca 0.

ARGENTINA – 1ST TOURNAMENT	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentinos	6	4	1	1	8	3	13
Arsenal	6	3	3	0	7	2	12
San Lorenzo	6	4	0	2	10	7	12
Newell's	6	3	2	1	9	6	11
Estudiantes	6	2	4	0	7	4	10
Gimnasia	6	3	1	2	7	7	10
Colon	6	3	1	2	6	6	10
Lanus	6	2	3	1	8	4	9
Velez	6	2	3	1	7	4	9
Quilmes	6	3	0	3	5	6	9
Boca	6	3	0	3	8	11	9
Godoy Cruz	6	2	2	2	4	3	8
River Plate	6	2	1	3	5	4	7
Rafaela	6	2	1	3	6	10	7
All Boys	6	1	3	2	4	5	6
Rosario	6	2	0	4	5	8	6
Olimpo	6	1	2	3	6	9	5
Belgrano	6	1	2	3	6	10	5
Tigre	6	1	1	4	4	8	4
Racing	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

13-round tournament (13x1); no relegation after 1st tournament.

BRAZIL

Aug 14: Santos 1 Vasco 1; Mineiro 2 Bahia 0; Criciuma 3 Nautico 0; Coritiba 1 Portuguesa 1; Vitoria 3 Ponte Preta 1; Goias 1 Flamengo 1; Gremio 3 Cruzeiro 1; Fluminense 0 Corinthians 0.
Aug 15: Sao Paulo 1 Paranaense 1; Botafogo 3 Internacional 3.
Aug 17: Cruzeiro 5 Vitoria 1; Vasco 2 Gremio 3; Nautico 0 Fluminense 1.
Aug 18: Portuguesa 1 Botafogo 3; Ponte Preta 0 Goias 1; Corinthians 1 Coritiba 0; Flamengo 0 Sao Paulo 0; Paranaense 2 Criciuma 1; Internacional 0 Mineiro 0; Bahia 0 Santos 0.
Aug 24: Santos 2 Vitoria 0; Ponte Preta 0 Cruzeiro 2; Flamengo 0 Gremio 1; Criciuma 2 Coritiba 1.
Aug 25: Vasco 1 Corinthians 1; Sao Paulo 2 Fluminense 4; Bahia 2 Nautico 0; Mineiro 2 Portuguesa 1; Internacional 3 Goias 3; Paranaense 2 Botafogo 0.
Aug 31: Gremio 1 Ponte Preta 0; Goias 0 Mineiro 0; Nautico 1 Paranaense 4; Portuguesa 4 Bahia 2; Fluminense 0 Santos 2.
Sep 1: Botafogo 0 Sao Paulo 0; Corinthians 4 Flamengo 0; Vitoria 0 Criciuma 1; Coritiba 0 Internacional 0; Cruzeiro 5 Vasco 3.
Sep 3: Goias 2 Gremio 0; Nautico 0 Sao Paulo 1.
Sep 4: Flamengo 2 Vitoria 1; Paranaense 2 Santos 1; Portuguesa 2 Ponte Preta 1; Bahia 1 Cruzeiro 3; Internacional 1 Corinthians 0; Mineiro 2 Fluminense 2.
Sep 5: Botafogo 3 Coritiba 1; Sao Paulo 1 Criciuma 2; Nautico 0 Vasco 3.
Sep 7: Fluminense 1 Bahia 0; Vitoria 1 Mineiro 1; Ponte Preta 1 Internacional 3; Santos 1 Goias 0; Gremio 3 Portuguesa 2.
Sep 8: Corinthians 0 Nautico 0; Cruzeiro 1 Flamengo 0; Coritiba 2 Sao Paulo 0; Vasco 0 Paranaense 0; Criciuma 1 Botafogo 2.

PERU

Long trip for nothing

Union Comercio striker Jair Baylon travelled 900km to play for his former club, Universitario, against Melgar and was substituted without even touching the ball.

The Peruvian Football Federation had ordered that the same two line-ups must start the remaining eight minutes of the Peruvian top-flight game between Universitario and Melgar that was abandoned in July. Baylon was substituted to avoid any injury that may be prejudicial to his new side, Union Comercio.

The original game had been stopped in the 82nd minute, with the score at 2-2, when match officials were attacked by Melgar players and coaching staff after a potential winning goal was disallowed. There were no further goals as the eight minutes of the game were completed.

Universitario were second to Real Garcilaso in the first stage of the league.

EL SALVADOR

Five hundred games

Mauricio Quintanilla, a 31-year-old defender with Luis Angel Firpo, made his 500th appearance in El Salvador's top flight as his side beat UES 1-0.

CHINA

Leaders lose at last

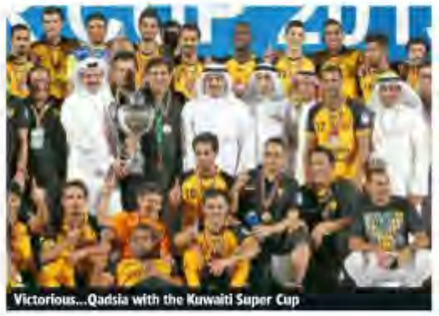
Runaway leaders Guangzhou Evergrande lost in the Chinese Super League for the first time in over 10 months when they were beaten 1-0 by relegation-threatened Tianjin Teda. Australian midfielder Erik Paartalu scored the only goal of the game.

KUWAIT

Extra-time thriller

Qadsia beat fellow AFC Cup quarter-finalists Kuwait SC 3-1 to win the Kuwait Super Cup with all four goals coming in extra-time.

Abdulhadi Khamis cancelled out Saleh Al Sheikh's opener for Qadsia, but the Emir's Cup winners eventually triumphed over the Kuwait Premier League champions with further goals from Fahad Al Ansari and Bader Al Mutwa.


Victorious...Qadsia with the Kuwaiti Super Cup

PALESTINE

Winners spot on

Shabab Al Khaleel beat reigning league champions Shabab Al Thahrea on penalties, after a 1-1 draw, to win the Palestinian Super Cup.

QATAR

Al Rayyan triumph

Goals from Mousa Haroon and Rodrigo Tabata gave Al Rayyan a 2-0 victory over Kharaitiyat in the season-opening Sheikh Jassim Cup Final.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	19	12	4	3	42	18	40
Botafogo	19	10	6	3	32	21	36
Gremio	19	10	4	5	26	19	34
Paranaense	19	9	7	3	34	24	34
Corinthians	19	7	9	3	19	8	30
Internacional	18	7	9	2	31	25	30
Coritiba	19	7	7	5	23	20	28
Goias	19	6	8	5	19	22	26
Santos	17	6	7	4	20	14	25
Vasco	19	6	6	7	29	32	24
Criciuma	19	7	2	10	25	31	23
Vitoria	19	6	5	8	23	27	23
Bahia	19	6	5	8	18	24	23
Fluminense	19	6	4	9	22	26	22
Flamengo	19	5	7	7	19	23	22
Minero	18	5	7	6	18	22	22
Portuguesa	19	4	7	8	26	32	19
Sao Paulo	19	4	6	9	17	22	18
Ponte Preta	16	4	3	11	20	30	15
Nautico	18	2	3	13	9	32	9

38-round season (19x2); bottom 4 will be relegated

PERU

PERU – 1ST STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Garcilaso[1]	30	17	7	6	41	20	57
Universitario	30	15	8	7	41	24	53
Cristal	30	14	7	9	51	33	49
Cajamarca	30	13	8	9	33	28	47
Cesar Vallejo	30	12	10	8	35	32	46
Leon	30	11	12	7	38	27	45
Alianza Lima	30	13	6	11	34	33	45
Inti Gas	30	11	10	9	41	38	43
Huancayo	30	11	9	10	40	41	42
Cienciano	30	10	9	11	30	39	39
Melgar	30	8	12	10	32	33	36
Juan Aurich	30	8	9	13	37	37	33
Pacifico	30	7	12	11	22	33	33
Uv San Martin	30	8	6	16	26	44	30
Un Comercio	30	6	8	16	24	40	26
Jose Galvez	30	6	7	17	39	65	25

In 2nd stage, teams finishing in odd-numbered positions in 1st stage table play against each other in Group A; teams finishing in even-numbered positions play in Group B; all carry forward full 1st stage record. The group winners go forward to the 3rd stage, to decide the champions. No relegation after 1st stage.
[1] 1pt deducted

CONCACAF

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group 1
Aug 26: W Connection (T&T) 0 Houston Dynamo (USA) 0.
Aug 27: Houston Dynamo 2 Arabe Unido (Pan) 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Houston	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Arabe Unido	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
W Connection	2	0	1	1	1	3	1

Group 2
Aug 21: Real Estelí (Nic) 0 Olimpia (Hnd) 1.
Aug 27: Olimpia 0 Kansas City (USA) 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kansas City	2	2	0	0	4	0	6
Olimpia	2	1	0	1	1	2	3
Real Estelí	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

Group 3
Aug 22: Cruz Azul (Mex) 3 Herediano (CR) 0.
Aug 28: Valencia (Hal) 1 Cruz Azul 2.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruz Azul	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Herediano	2	1	0	1	6	4	3
Valencia	2	0	0	2	2	8	0

Group 4
Aug 22: San Miguelito (Pan) 1 Alajuelense (CR) 0.
Aug 29: Alajuelense 1 America (Mex) 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alajuelense	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
America	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
San Miguelito	2	1	0	1	1	1	3

Group 5
Aug 21: Heredia (Gtm) 1 Montreal Impact (Can) 0.
Aug 28: Heredia 1 San Jose Earthquakes (USA) 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Heredia	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Montreal	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
San Jose	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

Group 6
Aug 22: Comunicaciones (Gtm) 1 Toluca (Mex) 2.
Aug 29: Caledonia AIA (T&T) 0 Comunicaciones 3.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toluca	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
Comunicaciones	2	1	0	1	4	2	3
Caledonia	2	0	0	2	1	6	0

Group 7
Aug 26: Victoria (Hnd) 2 Tijuana (Mex) 3.
Aug 28: Tijuana 1 Luis Angel Firpo (ESv) 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tijuana	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Firpo	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Victoria	1	0	0	1	2	3	0

Group 8
Aug 26: Los Angeles Galaxy (USA) 2 Cartagines (CR) 0.
Aug 27: Cartagines 0 Isidro Metapan (ESv) 0.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cartagines	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Los Angeles	1	1	0	0	2	0	3
Metapan	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

Remaining matchdays: *Sep 17-19, Sep 24-26, Oct 22-24 (each team plays 4 times)*

Group winners qualify for quarter-finals

MEXICO

Apertura

Regular season
Aug 16: Morelia 2 Atlas 0; Santos 3 Tigres 0.
Aug 17: Cruz Azul 1 Atlante 0; Veracruz 0 Queretaro 0; Pachuca 0 America 1; Monterrey 2 Tijuana 1; Chiapas 0 Toluca 4.
Aug 18: Pumas 1 Leon 1; Guadalajara 2 Puebla 4.
Aug 23: Queretaro 2 Guadalajara 0; Tijuana 1 Santos 1.
Aug 24: America 3 Morelia 1; Atlante 1 Pachuca 1; Tigres 2 Chiapas 2; Leon 3 Monterrey 1; Atlas 1 Pumas 1.
Aug 25: Toluca 3 Veracruz 1; Puebla 1 Cruz Azul 2.
Aug 30: Morelia 4 Pachuca 1; Santos 0 Leon 2.
Aug 31: Cruz Azul 0 Queretaro 2; Veracruz 1 Tigres 1; Monterrey 0 Atlas 0; Chiapas 3 Tijuana 1.
Sep 1: Puebla 1 Atlante 0; Guadalajara 0 Toluca 0.
Sep 2: Pumas 1 America 4.
Sep 6: Queretaro 1 Puebla 0.
Sep 7: America 1 Monterrey 0; Tigres 3 Guadalajara 3; Pachuca 0 Pumas 0; Atlante 2 Morelia 2; Leon 0 Chiapas 1; Atlas 2 Santos 2; Tijuana 3 Veracruz 0.
Sep 8: Toluca 1 Cruz Azul 2.

MEXICO – APERTURA: REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America	7	6	1	0	17	5	19
Morelia	8	5	2	2	19	13	17
Leon	8	4	4	1	11	6	16
Cruz Azul	8	5	1	3	14	12	16
Queretaro	8	4	3	2	13	8	15
Chiapas	8	3	5	1	15	14	14
Toluca	8	3	4	2	15	10	13
Santos	8	3	4	1	14	10	13
Veracruz	8	3	4	2	13	13	13
Tijuana	8	3	2	3	13	11	11
Puebla	8	2	4	3	11	12	10
Pachuca	8	2	4	3	7	10	10
Tigres	8	2	3	3	13	14	9
Monterrey	8	1	4	4	8	14	7
Atlas	8	0	6	3	9	15	6
Guadalajara	8	1	3	4	8	15	6
Pumas	8	0	5	4	4	14	5
Atlante	8	0	3	5	8	16	3

17-round regular season (17x1); top 8 will enter apertura championship play-offs; no relegation after apertura

ST KITTS & NEVIS

Championship Final

(best of 3 legs)

1st leg
Aug 17
Conaree 0
St Pauls 0
Conaree 4-1 on pens

2nd leg
Aug 21
St Pauls 0
Conaree 1 (Liburd 89)
HT: 0-0
Conaree won championship 2 legs to 0

UNITED STATES

Regular season
Aug 17: Montreal 2 DC United 1; New England 2 Chicago 0; Columbus 2 Toronto 0; New York 0 Philadelphia 0; Houston 3 Seattle 1; Colorado 2 Vancouver 0; Los Angeles 4 Salt Lake 2; Portland 2 Dallas 1.
Aug 18: San Jose 1 Kansas City 0.
Aug 21: Chivas 1 Dallas 3; Portland 3 Salt Lake 3.
Aug 22: Chicago 1 Kansas City 0.
Aug 24: DC United 1 Toronto 1; Montreal 5 Houston 0; Dallas 2 San Jose 2; Vancouver 0 Los Angeles 1; Salt Lake 4 Columbus 0.
Aug 25: Chivas 3 New York 2; New England 5 Philadelphia 1; Seattle 1 Portland 0.
Aug 30: Toronto 1 New England 1; Salt Lake 4 Portland 2.
Aug 31: Philadelphia 0 Montreal 0; New York 2 DC United 1; Kansas City 2 Colorado 1; Columbus 0 Seattle 1; Los Angeles 3 San Jose 0.
Sep 1: Chicago 1 Houston 1; Vancouver 2 Chivas 2
Sep 4: Columbus 2 Houston 0; Seattle 1 Chivas 0.
Sep 7: Dallas 3 Vancouver 1; Kansas City 3 Columbus 0; Seattle 2 Chicago 1; Los Angeles 0 Colorado 1; Portland 4 Toronto 0.
Sep 8: Houston 1 New York 4; New England 2 Montreal 4; Chivas 1 DC United 0; San Jose 1 Philadelphia 0.

USA – REGULAR: EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Montreal	26	13	6	7	45	37	45
New York	28	13	6	9	44	36	45
Kansas City	28	13	6	9	41	27	45
Philadelphia	28	10	9	9	37	38	39
New England	27	10	7	10	37	29	37
Houston	27	10	7	10	31	35	37
Chicago	26	10	5	11	32	37	35
Columbus	28	9	5	14	31	38	32
Toronto	27	4	10	13	23	39	22
DC United	27	3	5	19	16	44	14

34-round regular season (7x3 & 2x2 in own conference, 5x1 in western conference)

USA – REGULAR: WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salt Lake	28	14	6	8	52	35	48
Seattle	26	14	4	8	35	27	46
Los Angeles	27	13	4	10	43	33	43
Colorado	28	11	9	8	35	29	42
Portland	27	10	12	5	43	30	42
Dallas	27	10	10	7	39	39	40
Vancouver	27	10	7	10	39	38	37
San Jose	28	10	7	11	29	40	37
Chivas	28	6	7	15	27	48	25

34-round regular season (8x3 in own conference, 10x1 in eastern conference)

Top 5 in both conferences will enter championship play-offs; no relegation from this league

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A
Aug 17: AC Leopards (Con) 0 Al Ahly (Egy) 1; Orlando Pirates (SAf) 4 Zamalek (Egy) 1.
Aug 31: Al Ahly 2 AC Leopards 1.
Sep 1: Zamalek 2 Orlando Pirates 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Orlando Pirates	4	2	1	1	8	3	7
Al Ahly	4	2	1	1	4	5	7
AC Leopards	4	1	1	2	2	3	4
Zamalek	4	1	1	2	4	7	4

Group B
Aug 18: Coton Sport (Cam) 2 Recreativo Libolo (Ang) 1; Sewe Sports (IvC) 0 Esperance (Tun) 1.
Aug 31: Esperance 1 Sewe Sports 0.
Sep 1: Recreativo Libolo 1 Coton Sport 1.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esperance	4	3	0	1	4	1	9
Coton Sport	4	2	1	1	4	4	7
Recreativo	4	1	1	2	4	6	4
Sewe Sports	4	1	0	3	3	4	3

Remaining matchdays: *Sep 13-15, Sep 20-22*

Top 2 in both groups qualify for semi-finals

CONFEDERATION CUP

Group A
Aug 17: Stade Malien (Mli) 0 Etoile Sahel (Tun) 0.
Aug 18: Saint George (Eth) 1 CS Sfaxien (Tun) 3.
Aug 31: Etoile Sahel 0 Stade Malien 1.
Sep 1: CS Sfaxien 1 Saint George 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CS Sfaxien[1] (Q)	4	4	0	0	7	2	12
Etoile Sahel	4	1	1	2	2	3	4
Stade Malien	4	1	1	2	2	4	4
Saint George	4	1	0	3	4	6	3

[1] *CS Sfaxien replaced Enugu Rangers (Nga), who were expelled from the tournament after fielding an ineligible player in the 4th round victory over CS Sfaxien*

Group B
Aug 18: CA Bizertin (Tun) 1 TP Mazembe (DRC) 0.
Aug 18: FUS Rabat (Mor) 1 ES Setif (Alg) 0.
Aug 30: ES Setif 1 FUS Rabat 1.
Sep 1: TP Mazembe 1 CA Bizertin 0.

CONFEDERATION CUP – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe	4	2	1	1	5	2	7
CA Bizertin	4	1	2	1	2	2	5
FUS Rabat	4	1	2	1	3	5	5
ES Setif	4	0	3	1	2	3	3

Remaining matchdays: *Sep 13-15, Sep 20-22*

Top 2 in both groups qualify for semi-finals

BURUNDI

BURUNDI – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Flambeau (C)	22	13	8	1	31	8	47
Athletico	22	13	4	5	41	19	43
LLB	22	12	7	3	36	18	43
Vital'O	22	13	3	6	46	22	42
Messager	22	8	7	7	26	25	31
Muzinga	22	9	3	10	30	29	30
Inter	22	8	6	8	29	28	30
Royal	22	7	8	7	22	23	29
Tchite	22	7	6	9	19	30	27
Prince Louis	22	7	1	14	20	40	22
Flamengo (R)	22	5	2	15	24	41	17
Espoir (R)	22	1	3	18	6	47	6

SENEGAL

SENEGAL – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Diambars (C)	30	14	10	6	42	25	52
Olympique	30	13	11	6	31	24	50
Pikine	30	12	13	5	21	12	49
Jaraaf	30	11	13	6	29	20	46
Port Autonome	30	11	12	7	27	17	45
Casa Sport	30	10	14	6	23	15	44
Linguere	30	10	14	6	32	25	44
Niary Tally	30	10	10	10	27	25	40
Toure Kounda	30	8	15	7	24	24	39
Yeggo	30	6	14	8	13	13	36
Ouakam	30	9	9	12	26	36	36
Dakar UC	30	7	12	11	30	32	33
Goree (R)	30	6	12	12	19	33	30
Douanes (R)	30	5	13	12	15	22	28
Gued'waye (R)	30	5	12	13	19	33	27
ASSUR (R)	30	5	8	17	11	33	23

ASIA

IRAQ

IRAQ – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Shorta (C)	34	20	12	2	62	29	72
Arbil	34	21	7	6	68	34	70
Quwa Jawiya	34	21	6	7	60	33	69
Al Zawraa	34	18	11	5	61	29	65
Duhok	34	16	10	8	54	35	58
Baghdad	34	13	14	7	36	28	53
Zakho	34	14	10	10	48	41	52
Al Minaa	34	15	7	12	54	48	52
Al Naft	34	13	7	14	43	43	46
Naft Al Janoob	34	9	12	13	47	49	39
Najaf	34	10	8	16	34	43	38
Karbala	34	9	10	15	40	49	37
Al Masafi	34	10	7	17	27	38	37
Al Talaba	34	9	8	17	35	47	35
Al Kahraba (R)	34	9	7	18	30	49	34
Sulimaniya (R)	34	9	7	18	37	60	34
Al Shaa (R)	34	4	13	17	23	46	25
Kirkuk (R)	34	4	6	24	17	74	18

JAPAN

Aug 17: Urawa 4 Oita 3; Ventforet 1 Kawasaki 3; Tokyo 0 Yokohama 2; Kashima 1 Albirex 0; Sagan 2 Omiya 1; Sanfrecce 1 Nagoya 1; Cerezo 4 Shimizu 1; Shonan 1 Jubilo 1; Kashiwa 0 Vegalta 0.
Aug 24: Shimizu 0 Urawa 2; Oita 1 Sanfrecce 1; Sagan 1 Vegalta 0; Nagoya 1 Cerezo 1; Jubilo 0 Tokyo 0; Albirex 2 Kawasaki 1; Shonan 1 Ventforet 2; Kashima 2 Yokohama 1; Omiya 2 Kashiwa 3.
Aug 28: Vegalta 1 Cerezo 1; Kashiwa 5 Shonan 2; Tokyo 2 Sagan 3; Kawasaki 2 Omiya 1; Ventforet 2 Sanfrecce 0; Albirex 4 Jubilo 2; Shimizu 4 Kashima 3; Nagoya 2 Oita 1; Yokohama 3 Urawa 0.
Aug 31: Urawa 1 Albirex 0; Kashima 3 Kashiwa 1; Omiya 1 Yokohama 0; Shonan 3 Vegalta 2; Jubilo 1 Ventforet 1; Cerezo 0 Kawasaki 0; Sanfrecce 1 Tokyo 2; Sagan 1 Nagoya 1; Oita 2 Shimizu 3.

JAPAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yokohama	24	14	5	5	43	25	47
Urawa	24	14	4	6	46	33	46
Sanfrecce	24	13	5	6	39	23	44
Kashima	24	12	5	7	40	36	41
Cerezo	24	10	8	5	36	22	38
Omiya	24	12	3	9	37	30	39
Kawasaki	24	10	6	8	48	42	36
Nagoya	24	10	6	8	36	33	36
Kashiwa	24	10	6	8	40	43	36
Tokyo	24	10	5	9	41	31	35
Albirex	24	10	3	11	32	33	33
Vegalta	24	8	9	7	26	27	33
Shimizu	24	9	5	10	32	42	32
Sagan	24	7	6	11	38	50	27
Ventforet	24	6	7	11	22	34	25
Shonan	24	5	5	14	24	46	20
Jubilo	24	2	10	12	30	40	16
Oita	24	1	7	16	26	48	10

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

MONGOLIA

Championship Final

Aug 31 - Ulan Bator
Khangarid 0
Erchim 0
Aet
Erchim 4-1 on pens

SOUTH KOREA

SOUTH KOREA – REGULAR – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pohang	26	14	7	5	42	26	49
Ulsan	26	14	6	6	48	28	48
Jeonbuk	26	14	6	6	50	33	48
Seoul	26	13	7	6	44	31	46
Suwon	26	12	5	9	38	29	41
Incheon	26	11	8	7	37	30	41
Busan	26	11	7	8	33	27	40
Seongnam	26	11	7	8	36	31	40
Jeju	26	10	9	7	40	34	39
Chunnam	26	6	11	9	24	29	29
Gyeongnam	26	4	10	12	26	41	22
Daegu	26	4	8	14	24	41	20
Gangwon	26	2	9	15	18	49	15
Daejeon	26	2	8	16	22	52	14

top 7 form championship group; bottom 7 form relegation group (from which the bottom 2 will go down)

VIETNAM

VIETNAM – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hanoi T&T (C)	20	11	5	4	46	24	38
Da Nang	20	10	5	5	29	24	35
Hoang Anh GL	20	10	5	5	24	16	35
Song Lam NA	20	9	6	5	40	24	33
Thanh Hoa	20	9	6	5	40	33	33
Hai Phong	20	7	5	8	38	28	26
Dong Nai	20	6	7	7	27	36	25
Binh Duong	20	6	5	9	34	35	23
Dong Tam LA	20	7	1	12	31	53	22
Ninh Binh	20	4	6	10	23	32	18
Kien Giang	20	3	5	12	24	52	14
Xuan Thanh[1] (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] *Xuan Thanh withdrew from league; results annulled*

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(R) = relegated

FORTHCOMING FIXTURES

October 1/2
UEFA Champions League group games
October 3
Europa League group games
October 5/6
CAF Champions League semi-finals, first leg
October 11
Australian A-League starts
October 11/12/13/14/15
World Cup qualifiers
October 15
Asian Cup qualifiers
October 17 to November 8
Under-17 World Cup
October 18/19/20
CAF Champions League semi-finals, second leg
October 22/23
UEFA Champions League group games
October 23/24/25
CONCACAF Champions League last round of group games
October 24
Europa League group games
October 25/26
AFC Champions League Final, first leg

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World Soccer's GREAT TEAMS

West Germany 1980

The Euro 80 winners were worthy champions and confirmed their reputation as international heavyweights

Impressive...West Germany line-up before the Euro 80 Final against Belgium

West Germany went over a year undefeated in the run-up to the 1980 European Championship finals in Italy. In the Final, in Rome's Olympic Stadium, Horst Hrubesch snatched a late winner over outsiders Belgium as West Germany were confirmed as European champions – four years after they had lost on penalties to the Czech Republic.

In terms of overall quality, Euro 80 was not great and the Germans were missing the injured Klaus Fischer and Rainer Bonhof. But youngsters Bernd Schuster and Hans-Peter Briegel, who had gone to the finals as reserves, emerged as key figures. With a young Lothar Matthaus among the substitutes, West Germany's international future looked strong.

The same team would go on to earn widespread derision for their behaviour at the 1982 World Cup, when they colluded with Austria, and goalkeeper Harald Schumacher's attack on Patrick Battiston of France.

But the 1980 side were born winners – and worthy ones. WS

THE COACH AND HIS TEAM

Jupp Derwall

Only the third national team manager since the war, he was promoted from within the federation to succeed Helmet Schon, who retired after the disappointing campaign at the 1978 World Cup. Forced out in 1984, he coached Galatasaray and was highly influential in the development of Turkish football. He died in 2007.

Tactics

Germany's formation was effectively 1-3-3-3, with Stielike as the sweeper behind a back three which included attacking full-backs Kaltz and Dietz. Stielike's move to sweeper, replacing the out-of-sorts Cullmann, allowed a greater role for Schuster in midfield and for Allofs in attack, where Hrubesch was the central striker and Rummenigge the second striker.

THE STARTING XI

Harald Schumacher
Goalkeeper
First-choice keeper after Sepp Maier's retirement and an injury to Norbert Nigbur.

Manny Kaltz
Defender
Attacking full-back who switched from playing sweeper at 1978 World Cup.

Karl-Heinz Forster
Defender
Stopper, he was the younger brother of midfielder Bernd, who was also in the 1980 squad.

Bernard Dietz
Defender
Captain and left-back. Filled the gap vacated by Paul Breitner's (temporary) retirement.

Uli Stielike
Defender
Sweeper who enjoyed success in Spain as a midfielder with Real Madrid.

Hans-Peter Briegel
Midfielder
Former decathlete who was extremely versatile and could play in a number of positions.

Bernd Schuster
Midfielder
Emerged as one of Germany's heroes of the 1980 finals in Italy.

Hansi Muller
Midfielder
Stuttgart stalwart who went on to have a successful career as a media pundit.

Karl-Heinz Rummenigge
Forward
Striker who could also play in midfield. Now Bayern Munich president.

Klaus Allofs
Forward
Lively attacker who scored a hat-trick against Holland in the group stage.

Horst Hrubesch
Forward
Centre-forward called up to replace Klaus Fischer, who was out with a broken leg.

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